



ILLUSTRATED TALES TO BEWITCH & BEDEVIL YOU

588856

VAMPI
#16

APRIL 1972

VAMPIRELLA

A WARREN MAGAZINE PDC 60¢

**DRACULA CALLS FORTH THE MAD DEMON GOD,
AS VAMPIRELLA LIES HELPLESS IN CHAINS!**



**FOR SHEER TERROR,
"CILIA"
ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HORROR STORIES
EVER TOLD! Pg. 29**

VAMPI'S FEARY TALES

SISTERS TO THE GORGONS, DRAGON-WOMEN WHOSE LOOKS TURNED MEN TO STONE, WERE THOSE CHARMING OLD LADIES CALLED...

THE GRAY WOMEN



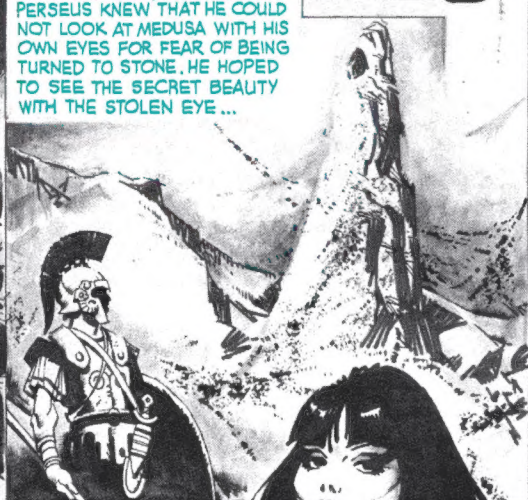
IN A TWILIGHT WORLD FOREIGN TO THE RAYS OF THE SUN AND THE MOON DWELT THE GRAY WOMEN, SWANLIKE BEINGS WITH THE HEAD AND ARMS OF OLD WOMEN! BUT THEIR MOST PECULIAR FEATURE WAS THEIR EYE, FOR THEY HAD BUT **ONE** TO PASS AROUND BETWEEN THEM!



EVENTUALLY, THE GREEK HERO PERSEUS WAS ABLE TO STEAL THE EYE AS IT WAS PASSED FROM ONE TO THE OTHER. HE FORCED THEM TO HELP HIM ON HIS JOURNEY TO THE BLISSFUL LAND OF THE HYPERBOREANS



WHERE DWELT HIGH IN HER MOUNTAIN LAIR, MEDUSA! PERSEUS KNEW THAT HE COULD NOT LOOK AT MEDUSA WITH HIS OWN EYES FOR FEAR OF BEING TURNED TO STONE. HE HOPED TO SEE THE SECRET BEAUTY WITH THE STOLEN EYE ...



AND WE ALL KNOW OF THE SERPENT-HAIRED BEAUTY AND WHAT HAPPENED TO HER, DON'T WE?



NO. 16
APRIL
1972

VAMPIRELLA

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SCARLET LETTERS

"Keep up the VAMPIRELLA saga," writes reader THOMAS ZAENGER p. 5, "and you'll have a first rate comics novel."

AND BE A BRIDE OF CHAOS

The continuing adventures of Vampirella as she and Pendragon travel to the Carnic Alps with Count Dracula as guide.

PURIFICATION

The simple, comic tale of a peasant girl much too beautiful for her elders. They sought to purify the innocent.

GORILLA MY DREAMS

Beware, white hunter, for evil is not always what evil seems. A tale with a twist about a wife who really was a gorilla.

GIRL ON THE RED ASTEROID

The lone survivor of a spaceship crash discovers a strangely tinted world and a mammoth egg, just about to hatch.

LOVER

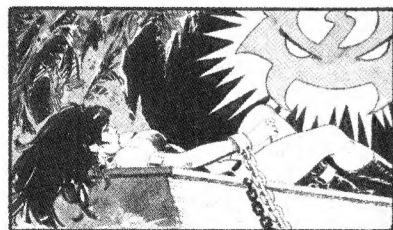
Drying blood had turned the city's streets the color of dull russet and the night light spoke of terrifying shadows.

VAMPI'S FLAMES

A short tale of the nearly departed by fan GURN LEE of Portage, Indiana plus a host of VAMPIRELLA look-alikes

CILIA

A classic story of a woman come from the sea and bound to tragedy as surely as the seashell whisper of the ocean.



VAMPI'S SCARLET LETTERS



“The Wedding Gift” in VAMPIRELLA #12 really blew my mind. Nick Cuti did a really masterful job on the story while Mike Ploog’s artwork was fine. The women’s liberation theme was fantastic. “Deadman’s Treasure!” was a bummer however. The artwork was the only good thing about it. For all we know from the story, Captain Patch is still running around loose!

RONNIE ICE
Mish, Indiana



Captain Patch of “Deadman’s Treasure” VAMPIRELLA #15 still loose among us? So says Indiana reader Ronnie Ice.

I really love the continuing stories about you, VAMPI. “Isle of the Huntress!” in VAMPIRELLA #14 was another great story. Jose Gonzalez is a great artist (for a profile of VAMPI artist Gonzalez, see Vampi’s Flames — ed.) and Archie Goodwin writes great stories.

TERRY FALK
Branford, Conn.

“How could a man have written The Wedding Gift?”

Enjoyed “The Wedding Gift” and “Wolf Hunt” in VAMPIRELLA #14. How could a man have written “The Wedding Gift?”



CAROLEE BUONANTORY
Lake Peekskill, N.Y.

Probably with the aid of a woman, Carolee.

As a hardcore fantasy fan, I can only say that VAMPIRELLA, Creepy and Eerie have the greatest potential today in the field of fantasy/horror publications. In my opinion, the very best issue of VAMPIRELLA so far was #12. It contained an excellent combination of horror, fantasy and adventure. Jose Gonzalez’ artwork on “Death’s Dark Angel” was one of the most memorable jobs I’ve seen in some time. Please keep the adventures of VAMPIRELLA as a regular feature. Her stories form the backbone of every issue of VAMPIRELLA. The series gives your readers something to look forward to. Perhaps one of your writers could be persuaded to write a novel about VAMPIRELLA. Most fans would really welcome a VAMPIRELLA novel. Never drop the excellent qualities that make your magazines what they are.

NORMAN E. DAVISON
Union, N.J.

VAMPIRELLA #13 was the first VAMPIRELLA magazine I’ve ever seen. Sorry I missed the others. It was great! I sent for a subscription because I can’t wait to get more issues. I think VAMPIRELLA should be pictured on the cover of her magazine as she is the star.

DAVID TOMS
Washington Crossing, Pa.

I’ve been reading Warren magazines since Creepy #1. I thought it was about time I expressed some of my viewpoints, particularly in regard to VAMPIRELLA #12. Archie Goodwin’s scripts for the VAMPIRELLA saga have been the best scripts yet. Keep in putting quality stuff like this. The ending of “The Eye of Ozirios” was trite. As to “Quest,” I can’t say that I care much for the rectangular, balloonless style in which the story was presented. The script was also less than original. Enough good words have been said of Wally Wood’s “To Kill a God” already.

DAVID MICHELINIE
Coral Gables, Fla.

The quality of VAMPIRELLA has improved greatly. The VAMPIRELLA series is one of the best I’ve read and I’ve read an awful lot of horror stories.

LEE PELTON
St. Louis Park, Minn.

All I have to say is congratulations on converting a great book like VAMPIRELLA devoted to horror to one filled with love stories and fairy tales! I think I’ll stick with Creepy and Eerie from now on. I know this letter will never see print but I really don’t care.



L. F.
Ozone Park, N.Y.

Your letter has seen print, L. F., even if we only know your initials. VAMPIRELLA hasn’t really gone the true love story route, has she? Opinions?

The cover of VAMPIRELLA #13 was nothing to brag about. Neither was the interior artwork. Except for the work of Jose Gonzalez and Gary Kaufman both of whom are great artists, the book lacked great art. “The Silver Thief” and the Pharaoh’s Daughter” wasn’t much.

RANDY PALMER
Arlington, Va.

Congratulations! You may not have won a Warren Award in 1970 but you’re the greatest anyway! (See the report on the first annual Warren Awards in VAMPIRELLA #13, pages 54 & 55. VAMPI lost the first time out but she won at the 1971 Warren Awards as seen last issue, VAMPIRELLA #15, pages 48 to 50—ed.) Even if you lost however, you won a KEF Award, which is my award for best magazine. Put out a VAMPIRELLA poster and you may just be able to win my poster of the year award. The Aurora model of VAMPIRELLA is superb.

KARL E. FRIBERG
Concord, Mass.



Karl enclosed the KEF Award. KEF stands for his initials. The award was a cute little cutout of me from the Aurora model box.

VAMPIRELLA #14 was good but not as good as past issues. The stories I liked best were “Isle of the Huntress!” and “Wolf Hunt.” Doesn’t VAMPIRELLA wear anything besides that costume of hers?

MARK HOFFMAN
Seminole, Fla.

The Aurora VAMPI is super! More!

KARL E. FRIBERG
Concord, Mass.

VAMPIRELLA, you are the prettiest vampire around! You ought to tell that old fish-face Dracula to eat his heart out!

DENNIS GATES
Valiant, Okla.

Our hobby department just received a shipment of Aurora’s new “horror” plastic goodies. Especially love your kit, VAMPI! It should be a really big success!

BERT DUCH
S. Plainfield, N.J.



I am happy to say that I now have the Aurora model of my all-time favorite, VAMPIRELLA! She’s the greatest.

PRESTON S. OWENS
Monroeville, N.J.

The VAMPIRELLA model kit really looks sensational!

R. D. HAWKS
College Park, Ga.

VAMPI, you’re the perfect model!

JEFF DENNIS
Hicksville, Ohio

Turn out more VAMPI models! Where I live, they sell like crazy!

GABE ROLDMAN
Milpitas, Ca.

“Truly, Vampirella and Amazonia should belong to Women's Lib!”

You committed a grave error in **VAMPIRELLA** #12, in fact an injustice to those familiar with mythology. The error was in Wally Wood's story, "To Kill a God!" Anubis is not evil. Further, he was a Jackal God, not a Wolf God as the story portrayed him. His spirit world holds terror only for those who have lived by terror. Cleopatra was dedicated to Mother Isis. Anubis is not a vengeful God. I bear him incense and flowers at the temple whenever I can for he is a kind God.

VICTORIA LORE
Hollywood, Ca.



Hope everything's square with Anubis now, Victoria.

VAMPIRELLA #13 was one of the best issues I've ever seen. The artwork in "The Lurker in the Deep!" was great. The opening page of the story, page 6, was especially beautiful! I also liked the way **VAMPIRELLA** changed form on p. 11. "Eye of the Beholder" was a good story although I didn't much care for the art.

ALFRED GONZALEZ
Mt. Vernon, N.Y.

VAMPIRELLA #13 stands out as one of the best issues yet. "Lurker in the Deep" was the story which prompted me to write. Jose Gonzalez has outdone Frazetta in his rendering of you.

DON NORTON
McHenry, Ill.

"The Sword of Light" in **VAMPIRELLA** #14 was quite an interesting story. Question however. How could a common sword slice an armored man in two?

GLENN GIN
Los Angeles, Ca.



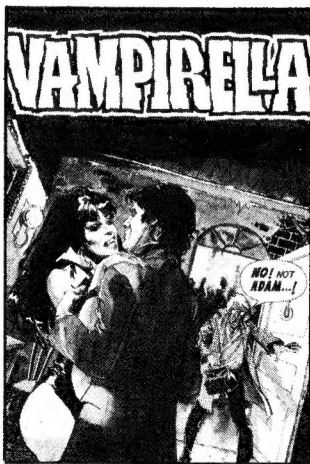
I don't know, Glenn. I guess you could say the story had a slice of life ending.

To date, I have seen three issues of **VAMPIRELLA**, #'s 12, 13 and 14. **VAMPIRELLA** #12 was quite good except for "Quest" which was rather confusing. "From Death's Dark Corner!" in **VAMPIRELLA** #13 was the only poor story in that issue. The **VAMPIRELLA** 1972 ANNUAL had truly the best stories. There were no flops in it.

JAMES BEIDLER
Leesport, Pa.

I enjoy all of your horrible magazines but the best stories to appear in any Warren magazines are the ones about you, **VAMPIRELLA**. By the way, I am eleven years old.

MICHAEL VESSIE
Talladega, Alabama



The splash page of "The Lurker in the Deep!" **VAMPIRELLA** #13 which reader Alfred Gonzalez described as "especially beautiful!"

I am a Harvard Senior who, in a few months, must go out into the world. I have no idea what I will eventually do but I would like to work at something I feel like doing. During my four years at college, there is little I have felt more like doing than reading **VAMPIRELLA**, Creepy and Eerie. Now, faced with the prospect of considerable spare time, I would like to contribute to your worthy publications. I am a fairly good artist with a taste for the bizarre. However, any clown can claim he's good enough for **VAMPIRELLA**, etc. while true genius is often rare. I would very much like to show you what I can do and I am already working on some stories which will make your blood run cold. Do you have any advice or suggestions for a struggling young artist just starting out? I'd really appreciate it as I'm sure other readers would.

TOM HOWELL
Cambridge, Mass.



Although the very mention of his name makes my blood run cold, Eerie #38 has a letter similar to yours, Tom, from reader John Workman. We get many such letters from aspiring artists and writers. We'd love to see your work, Tom. Be sure to see Workman's letter for some suggestions. Also take a look at Eerie #32 letters pages.

VAMPIRELLA #12 was one of your very best issues. "Death's Dark Angel" was a delightful tale. The **VAMPIRELLA** saga already shows a great deal more depth than most horror stories. Keep it up and you'll have a first rate comics novel on your hands. "Quest" by Jeff Jones was an experience. The half-novel half-comic was like reading a Prince Valiant comic strip. "To Kill a God!" was fantastic. The story idea was original and well executed. This was the best work you've had from Wally Wood in some time. Keep up the quality.

THOMAS D. N. ZAENGER
Toledo, Ohio

VAMPI, your magazine is the best going. You have the best art, stories & features. The best stories you've ever featured are "The Green Plague" from **VAMPIRELLA** #11 and "Death's Dark Angel" in **VAMPIRELLA** #12. This is the first time I've ever written you, **VAMPI**.

KAREN INGHAM
Toledo, Ohio



I hope it's not the last.

Just a couple of lines to let you know that I, along with your other fans, thoroughly enjoyed **VAMPIRELLA** #14. Jose Gonzalez' artwork on **VAMPIRELLA** is fantastic! I hope you keep him on the **VAMPIRELLA** series permanently. I am an art fan so I buy magazines mostly for the artwork and artists like Gonzalez and Esteban Maroto make your books well worth it.

MIKE O'NEAL
Albany, Ga.

For a while now, I've been moonlighting at a local department store, and just about a week or so ago, our hobby department received a shipment of Aurora's new "horror" plastic goodies. Love your kit, **VAMPI**. It should be a big success. Sorry but I have to confess I wasn't familiar with you until I saw the kit. I've since learned from my news-dealer that you're a very popular gallon of blood. I consider myself lucky to have begun our acquaintance with **VAMPIRELLA** #12. I've been an Arthurian and sword and sorcery fan for some time and "The Eye of Ozirios" was a most pleasant if somewhat corny surprise.

BERT DUCH
South Plainfield, N.J.

VAMPIRELLA certainly has some interesting misadventures. She is a true anti-heroine. Drakulon must have been a fascinating place. Its entire existence is based on a substratum of human consciousness. Just as we evolved, so too did the people of Drakulon, in a manner befitting their environment. They must have been predators at one time. The ethically sticky idea of institutionalized vampirism is overcome by giving Drakulon rivers of blood. **VAMPI**'s qualms about attacking humans is a good way of giving her character believability. Truly, **VAMPIRELLA** and Amazonia (last seen in **VAMPIRELLA** #12 in the story, "Amazonia and The Eye of Ozirios!" —ed.) should be in Women's Liberation.


CARA SHERMAN
Reno, Nevada

One of the best stories you've ever done bar none was "Wolf Hunt." It deserved a gold medal.

PETER BAUDLER
Brooklyn, N.Y.



A scene from "Wolf Hunt" from **VAMPIRELLA** #14. Said reader Peter Baudler, "the story really deserved a gold medal!"



MAIL CALL! Wouldn't you like to be there when **VAMPIRELLA** reads her mail? It's easy! Just write! Send letters to:

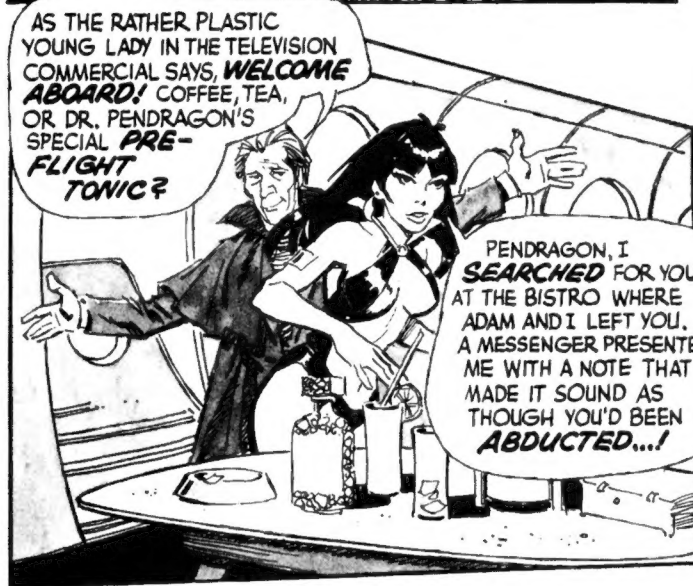
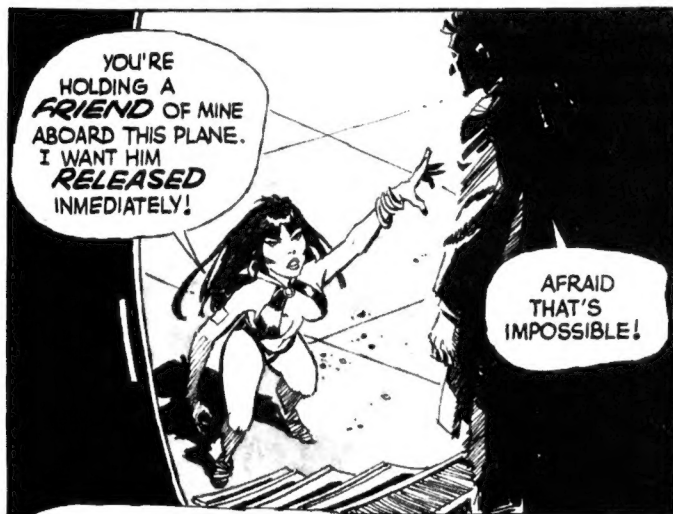
SCARLET LETTERS

PROLOGUE: THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON THE ISLAND REPUBLIC OF COTE DE SOLEIL HAS PROVIDED THE BACKGROUND FOR A WIDE SPECTRUM OF EVENTS. THOSE WHO THROG ITS OBSERVATION DECKS HAVE BEEN WITNESS TO POLITICAL ASSASSINATION, CRASH LANDINGS, AND THE ARRIVAL OF MOVIE STARS... BUT NEVER A THING LIKE THIS. THE APPEARANCE FROM NOWHERE OF A GIRL IN FRONT ON A PLANE CLEARED FOR DEPARTURE, AN APPEARANCE THAT WOULD SEEM NO LESS REMARKABLE IF THEY UNDERSTOOD THE POWERS THAT BROUGHT HER THERE, IF THEY KNEW THIS WAS A GIRL FROM ANOTHER WORLD. A GIRL CALLED...

VAMPIRELLA



YES, EVERYONE SEES THE GIRL, BUT WHO NOTICED THE **BAT** THAT FLUTTERED FROM THE SKY A FEW SECONDS PREVIOUS? THE BAT THAT IN A TWINKLING **BECAME** THE GIRL NOW URGENTLY SHOUTING...





ADAM?
ARE YOU
AWAKE?

RIGHT,
DAD. GUESS THE
SOUND OF THAT **JET**
CUT THROUGH MY
SLEEP.



WHAT'S *THAT* MEAN? VAMPIRELLA
GAVE ME A TRANSFUSION THAT SAVED
MY **LIFE** WHEN I WAS SHOT! CAN YOU
STILL THINK SHE'S SOME KIND
OF **MONSTER** AFTER TH--

DAD!
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?!



IT WAS GREAT OF PAUL GIRAUD
TO FIND A PLACE FOR ME TO
RECUPERATE... SHOULDN'T
COMPLAIN IF IT'S CLOSE
TO THE AIRPORT.

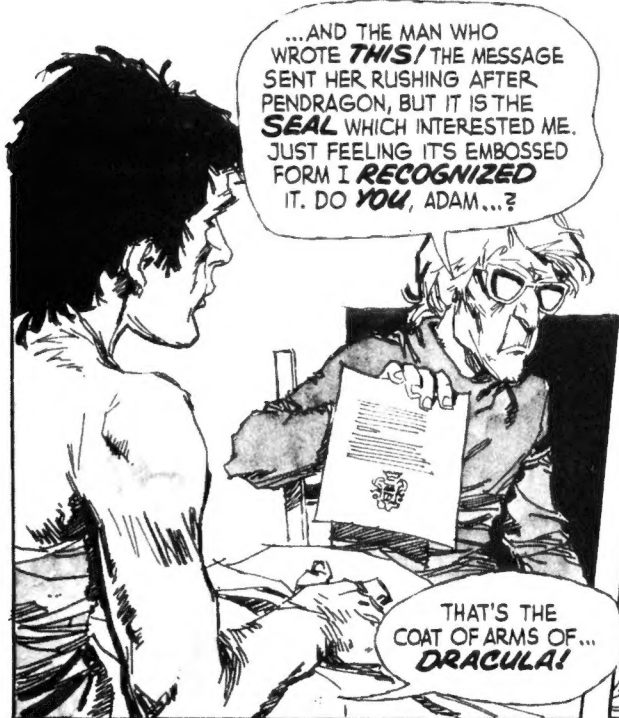
WHERE'S
VAMPIRELLA?

GONE. TO HELP
HER FRIEND, PENDRAGON...
SHE CLAIMED.



PERHAPS INNOCENTLY,
PERHAPS **NOT**. I'LL KNOW
WHEN I FIND HER...

I AM PREPARING TO DO
BATTLE WITH THE BRAND OF
EVIL WE VAN HELSINGS HAVE
FOUGHT FOR NEARLY A
CENTURY NOW. YOUR
GIRL FROM ANOTHER WORLD
IS INVOLVED...



...AND THE MAN WHO
WROTE **THIS**! THE MESSAGE
SENT HER RUSHING AFTER
PENDRAGON, BUT IT IS THE
SEAL WHICH INTERESTED ME.
JUST FEELING ITS EMBOSSED
FORM I **RECOGNIZED**
IT. DO **YOU**, ADAM...?

THAT'S THE
COAT OF ARMS OF...
DRACULA!



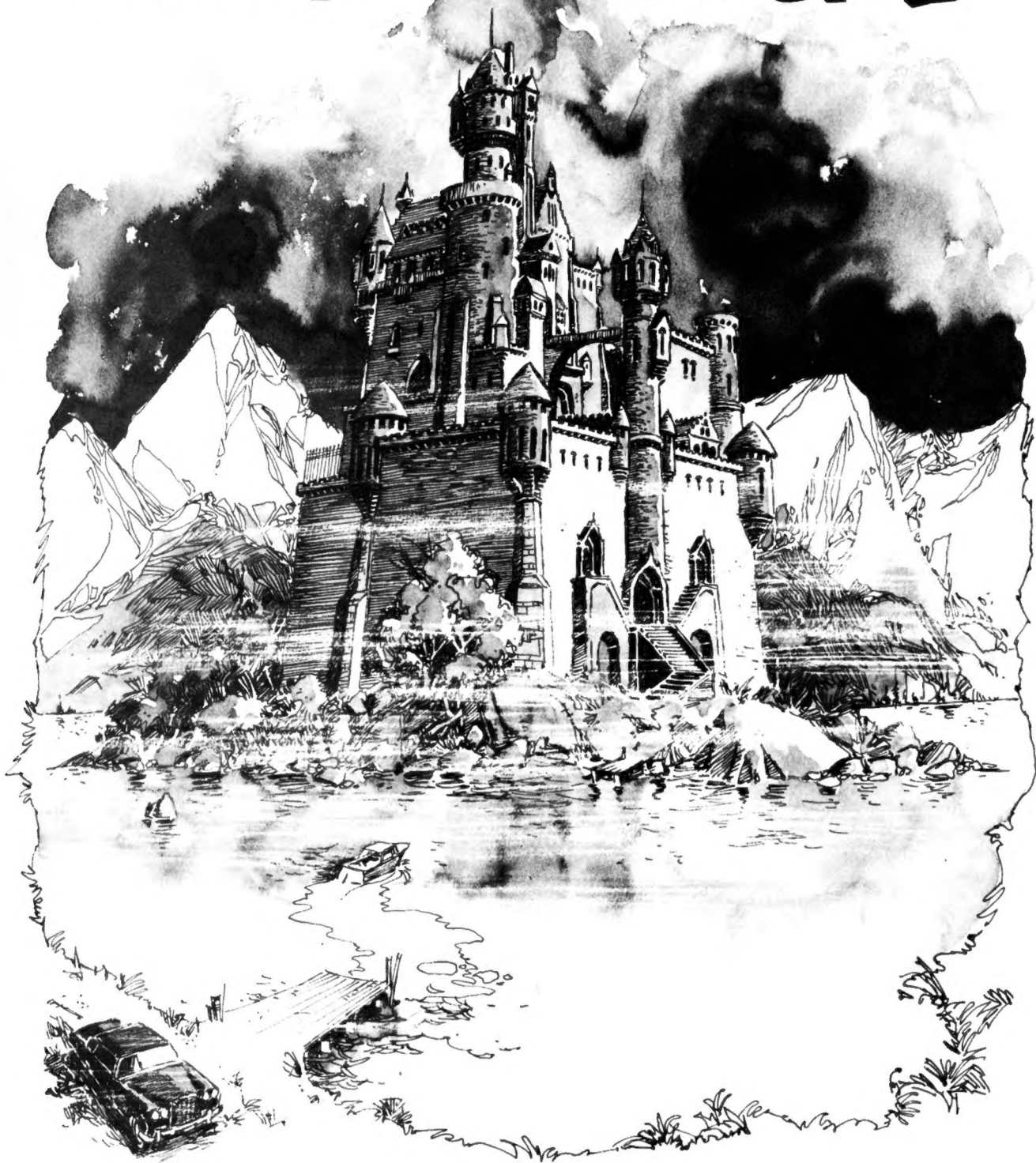
IT **C-CAN'T** BE...!
OUR OWN **ANCESTOR**
HELPED DESTROY HIM!
RIGHT, DAD... **RIGHT?!**

I'LL KNOW **THAT**,
ADAM, ONCE I FIND
THE **WRITER** OF
THAT NOTE!

WHEN YOU'RE WELL
ENOUGH TO TRAVEL,
FOLLOW ME, SON.

THE VALLEY AND THE BLACK, BLACK LAKE IT CRADLES LIES DEEP AMID THE CARNIC ALPS. SET IN ITS MIDST, LIKE SOME GRAY, CRUSTED JEWEL IS THE CASTLE. HERE, FOR A WEEK NOW, THE GUESTS HAVE BEEN ARRIVING. MEN, WOMEN, FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE GLOBE, BUT RENDERED SIMILAR IN TWO ASPECTS... THE TRACE OF WEALTH, THE TOUCH OF DECADENCE. FOR A WEEK NOW THEY HAVE COME TO THE CASTLE AND WAITED. WAITED FOR THE ARRIVAL OF THEIR HOST AND THE BEGINNING OF A CEREMONY. A CEREMONY IN WHICH ONE WILL BE CHOSEN...

...AND BE A BRIDE OF CHAOS



NOW, AS DAYLIGHT GIVES WAY TO APPROACHING NIGHT, TWO LAST GUESTS COME TO THE CASTLE...



COUNT MORDANTE
TELEPHONED ME TO MAKE
YOU COMFORTABLE UNTIL
HIS ARRIVAL... AND TO
EXPRESS HIS REGRETS
FOR NOT ACCOMPANYING
YOU ON THE DRIVE
FROM THE AIRFIELD.

SEE, VAMPIRELLA.
OUR HOST MAY BE
ELUSIVE, BUT WHO
COULD QUESTION HIS
HOSPITALITY?



FIRST THE COUNT
WAS RESTING, THEN
BUSINESS TOOK HIM
OFF THE PLANE AHEAD
OF US! AND NOW...

NOW, YOU'RE
LETTING THIS GREAT,
GLOOMY STONE HOVEL
GIVE YOU A CASE OF
NERVES, MY DEAR!
YOU MERELY NEED
SOMETHING TO LIFT
YOUR SPIRITS.

AND
SPEAKING OF
SPIRITS...



YOUR ROOM, SIGNORINA.
THE GENTLEMAN'S IS JUST
ACROSS THE HALL.

PENDRAGON, COULD
YOU **STAY** FOR A WHILE?
I FEEL UNEASY... PARTICULARLY
SINCE ARRIVING **HERE**.

BUT THIS WHOLE
BUSINESS SEEMS
ODD. TO TRAVEL
WITH A MAN AND
NEVER **SEE** HIM...!



... BY SHEER
COINCIDENCE I HAVE IN MY
POSSESSION A RARE ELIXIR
OF **AMAZING** POTENCY!
NATURALLY, I REALIZE YOUR
OTHERWORLDLY DIETARY
HABITS OFTEN **PRECLUDE**
SUCH INDULGENCES, BUT---



PENDRAGON!
IN THE COURTYARD--
THE MEN WHO BROUGHT
US ON THE LAUNCH!
CARRYING
A **COFFIN!**

EH?!



PLACE SEEMS **EMPTY**
NOW, MY DEAR. REMEMBER
WHAT I SAID ABOUT
NERVES--

BUT I **KNOW**
I SAW IT,
PENDRAGON!



PERHAPS THEN IT WAS **ANOTHER**
MANIFESTATION OF OUR HOST'S
MACABRE HUMOR.

YOU CAN'T EXPECT
ANYONE WHO'D HIRE AN
OLD FRAUD LIKE ME
TO BE PERFECT!

HAVING **DRUNK** TO THAT, I'D BEST GET
TO MY ROOM, VAMPIRELLA... AFTER ALL,
WE'VE A **PERFORMANCE** TO GIVE! AND
DON'T WORRY... **MY** NERVES ARE NOW
SETTLED ENOUGH FOR **BOTH** OF US!

COME, COME, MY
DEAR! AFTER ALL WE'VE
BEEN THROUGH TOGETHER,
WOULD I BE LIKELY TO LEAD
US INTO DANGER?



BUT, PENDRAGON...
HOW MUCH DO YOU
REALLY KNOW ABOUT
THIS PLACE, ABOUT COUNT
MORDANTE HIMSELF?



TRUST TO
PENDRAGON,
VAMPIRELLA, MY
SWEET!



BUT WHAT OF THE **OTHER** GUESTS IN THE SPRAWLING HOME OF COUNT MORDANTE?
WHAT OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN WAITING... IMPATIENTLY WAITING...?



IT IS DARK! WHY HASN'T HE **APPEARED**
YET? FOR A WEEK WE HAVE SAT IDLE
WHILE HE TRAIPSED ABOUT THE GLOBE.
IF A DECISION ISN'T MADE
TONIGHT--

I ASSURE YOU,
LUCRETIA, ONE
WILL BE.



AND NOW WE MAY **CHOOSE!**
THE ONE WOMAN AMONG US
WORTHY TO BECOME
BRIDE TO HIM WHOM
WE WORSHIP --

THE WOMAN
WHO SHALL HAVE
THE HONOR OF **HONORS...**
WHO SHALL BEAR THE **CHILD**
OF CHAOS! WHO SHALL LOOSE
THE SEED OF THE MAD GOD
UPON THE EARTH SO HE AND
HIS MAY **RULE** AGAIN!

QUITE SO, DEAR
LUCRETIA... ALL IN GOOD
TIME. BUT FOR THE MOMENT...
I'VE ARRANGED A SMALL
ENTERTAINMENT.



AN ENTERTAINMENT?
COUNT, WE ARE **HIGH**
PRIESTS AND PRIESTESSES
OF CHAOS FROM CULTS ALL OVER
THE WORLD... HERE FOR ONE
DECISION, AND THAT
DECISION **ONLY!**

AND I AM
DRACULA... WHO
MUST BE **OBEYED!**
INTO THE **THEATER!**



NOW, MY
FRIENDS... I PRESENT
THE GREAT
PENDRAGON!





COUNT, ARE YOU **MAD?** TO WE WHO HAVE MASTERED THE SPELLS OF THE **CRIMSON CHRONICLES**, BIBLE OF CHAOS, YOU PRESENT SOME BARELY COMPETENT **TRICKSTER?**

YOU ARE WITHOUT PEER, IN SERVING CHAOS, LUCRETIA, BUT SADLY LACK AN UNDERSTANDING OF **SHOWMANSHIP**. IT IS AN ACT'S **FINALE** THAT COUNTS.



AND HERE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, SIGNORE E SIGNORINE... THE LOVELY AND MYSTERIOUS... **VAMPIRELLA!**

STRANGE... EVERYONE ON MY HOME WORLD HAS THE ABILITY TO TAKE **BAT FORM**. YET HERE IT SEEMS A REMARKABLE FEAT OF **MAGIC**...

HENCE, IT HAS ALWAYS PROVIDED A STARTLING FINISH TO THE PERFORMANCE. BUT **NEVER** WITH THE REACTION THAT GREET'S **THIS** VIEWING OF VAMPIRELLA'S TRANSFORMATION!

ESCAPE FROM THE WINDOWLESS CHAMBER CUT OFF, VAMPIRELLA IS DRIVEN BACK TO THE STAGE...



COUNT! WHAT DOES THIS **MEAN?** THE GIRL IS ONE OF **YOURS!**

NOT **QUITE**, LUCRETIA. **QUICKLY... BAR ALL DOORS! SEAL OFF THE ROOM!**

PENDRAGON! BACK THROUGH THE CURTAINS... THIS IS SOME SORT OF **TRAP!** **P-PENDRAGON--?!**

WHAT'S **WRONG** WITH YOU? **WHY** DON'T YOU **MOVE--**



BECAUSE HAVING SERVED THE TASK I **SET** HIM TO, HE REVERTS TO HIS **TRUE STATE**... A ZOMBIE-LIKE **PAWN** OF DRACULA!

THEN WHATEVER **ELSE** HAPPENS... YOU'LL **PAY** FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO HIM!



HOW WILL YOU **MAKE** ME PAY, GIRL FROM BEYOND THE STARS? MY STRENGTH, MY COMBAT SKILLS, ARE THE **EQUAL** OF YOURS...

AND I HAVE HAD THEM **LONGER!**

BEHOLD,
FELLOW COMPANIONS
IN THE CULT OF CHAOS--
SHE WHO WILL BE THE
GREAT GOD'S **BRIDE**!

NO!

IT CAN'T BE SOME **OUTSIDER**!
THE HONOR MUST GO TO ONE OF
US... ONE WHO HAS SERVED
CHAOS UNSELFISHLY,
UNSTINTINGLY...!

YES, **ME!**
I, WHO HAVE
GARNERED MORE
SOULS FOR THE MASTER
THAN **ANY** PRIESTESS...
I, WHO HAVE DENIED
MYSELF THE LOVE OF ANY
MORTAL THAT I MIGHT
REMAIN **UNSPOILED**
FOR MIGHTY CHAOS
HIMSELF!

IF ANY IS FIT
TO BE HIS **BRIDE**,
TO BEAR HIS CHILD...
IT IS **ME!**

ONE SUCH
AS **YOU**,
LUCRETIA?

BENEATH YOUR
SHOUTING I HEAR ONE
WORD, LUCRETIA...
AMBITION. GREATER
QUALITIES THAN **THAT**
ARE NECESSARY FOR THE
MOTHER OF A CHILD
OF CHAOS!

WHAT
QUALITIES CAN
SHE HAVE? ONE
OF YOUR **UNDEAD**...
A MERE
VAMPIRE?!!

SHE IS NO MERE VAMPIRE,
LUCRETIA... **NOR** MERE MORTAL,
AS ARE YOU AND THE OTHERS!
SHE IS OF A RACE **SUPERIOR**
TO BOTH...

...THE RACE
THAT SPAWNED
COUNT DRACULA!



AS WE TAKE
HER TO THE CHAMBER
BENEATH THE LAKE
WHERE THE GREAT GOD
CHAOS WILL BE SUMMONED
FORTH, I WILL **TELL**
YOU OF THAT
RACE...

I WILL TELL YOU
WHAT NEITHER
MORTAL NOR UNDEAD
HAS **HEARD**
BEFORE...

I WILL TELL
YOU THE **ORIGIN**
OF DRACULA!

"LET YOUR MINDS DRIFT WITH MINE, MY COMPANIONS, ACROSS
THE IMMEASURABLE VASTNESS OF SPACE, BACK UNCOUNTABLE
CENTURIES IN TIME... TO A WORLD REVOLVING ABOUT TWIN
SUNS, A WORLD CALLED **DRAKULON!**"



"THIS IS A WORLD WHERE **BLOOD**, NOT WATER, FLOWS IN
GUSHING STREAMS. STREAMS WHICH IN TIME WILL TURN
TO **DUST** UNDER THE EVER-MOUNTING HEAT OF THE TWO
SUNS, BUT WHICH, AT THIS MOMENT, PROVIDE **SUSTENANCE**
FOR THE PLANET'S POPULATION..."



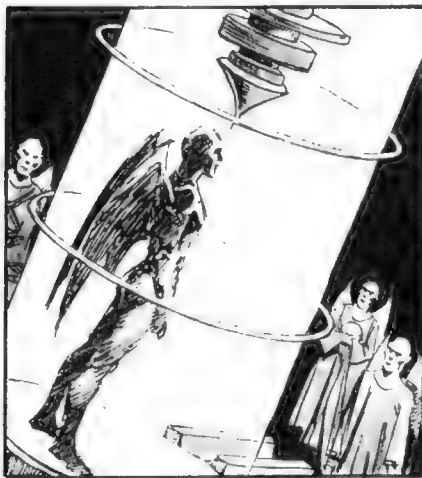
"... WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THOSE WHO FOLLOW AN **OLDER**
TRADITION, A TRADITION OF HUNTERS AND WARRIORS ... A
TRADITION LONG **OUTLAWED.**"

YOU ARE A **BARBARIAN!**
KILLING YOUR FELLOW MAN, DRINKING
THE **LIFE** FROM HIS VEINS... ALL
BECAUSE OF SOME PRIMITIVE
BELIEF THAT YOU TAKE ON THE
STRENGTH OF THE SLAIN!



I WAS **RAISED**
TO LOVE THE HUNT,
THE KILL, THE
EXCITEMENT... BETTER
THAN WALLOWING AT
SOME STREAM LIKE A
FARMYARD ANIMAL!

"I SPOKE THOSE WORDS... AND IN SPEAKING THEM CONDEMNED MYSELF TO **DEATH**. DEATH IN THE **DISINTEGRATION CHAMBER**... TO BE THE FOCAL POINT OF SUCH INCREDIBLE, UNCHECKED POWER THAT THE BODY, THE SOUL... THE ESSENCE OF THE BEING, BECOME **NOTHING**..."



"OR SO BELIEVED THE ELDERS OF DRAKULON! BUT SO **GREAT** WAS THE FORCE THAT STRUCK ME, MY BODY WAS NOT DISINTEGRATED, BUT **DISPLACED**... FORCED FROM ONE PLANE OF EXISTENCE INTO **ANOTHER**. FORCED BY COSMIC ACCIDENT INTO A DIMENSION WHERE A MAD GOD AND HIS SEVEN DEMON SERVANTS ENDURE BANISHMENT..."

"AND AS I DRIFTED IN THAT PLACE NOT A PLACE, SOMETHING FORMED BEFORE ME, SOMETHING INDISTINCT, YET AWESOME... CHALLENGING THE ICY CONTROL BRED IN EACH DRAKULONIAN... I LOOKED UPON THE **FACE OF CHAOS!**"



"...THE **NETHER-VOID!**"



"AND THE MAD GOD SAW IN ME A **SERVANT**, ONE TO AID IN HIS BATTLE TO REGAIN THE WORLD HE HAD LOST... **EARTH**..."

"THOUGH LACKING POWER TO FREE **HIMSELF**, CHAOS WAS ABLE TO PIERCE THE DIMENSIONAL BARRIER ENOUGH SO **I** COULD COME TO EARTH..."

"THE POWER OF CHAOS MADE MY BITE **INFECTIOUS**; EACH DYING VICTIM WOULD BECOME A VAMPIRE IN TURN..."

"STILL I **ENDURED**, ACQUIRING NEW CHAOS-GRANTED STRENGTHS THROUGH THE AGES, EVEN AS I **LOST** MANY DRAKULONIAN QUALITIES. IN TIME, I WAS ABLE TO MOVE AND LIVE AMONG HUMANS..."



"...AND IN **HIS** NAME, LOOSE **VAMPIRISM** UPON THE WORLD!"



"BUT IN PASSING THROUGH DIMENSIONS, MY **BODY STRUCTURE** WAS ALTERED; IT COULD NOT SURVIVE IN **SUNLIGHT**. THIS TOO WAS PASSED ON TO MY VICTIMS..."



"BUT IN TAKING A **NAME** FOR THIS HUMAN EXISTENCE. I KEPT A VESTIGE OF MY **OLD WORLD**... FOR OUT OF DRAKULON CAME **DRACULA!**"

"AS COUNT DRACULA I REACHED THE PEAK OF MY POWERS AND DURING THE LAST CENTURY DECIDED TO EXPAND MY WORK IN THE CAUSE OF CHAOS FROM TRANSYLVANIA, WHERE I'D SETTLED TO THE WORLD..."



"BUT IN COMING TO ENGLAND AND MAKING A VICTIM OF ONE **LUCY WESTENRA**, THE SEEDS OF MY FIRST **DEFEAT** WERE SOWN."

"BUT THOUGH MY **BODY** PERISHED, THE POWERS OF CHAOS KEPT MY **SPIRIT** ALIVE IN THE EARTH AND ASHES OF MY COFFIN! AND WHEN A YOUNG WASTREL NAMED **ADRIAN VARNEY** CHOSE TO LIE IN THE COFFIN AS A JOKE...I TOOK **CONTROL** OF HIM!*"



*SEE "THE COFFIN OF DRACULA" CREEPY CLASSICS TRADE PAPERBACK

"AND **AGAIN** I ENCOUNTERED VAN HELSING! ATTEMPTING TO ESCAPE, MY CARRIAGE VEERED OFF A CLIFF... MY HOST VARNEY DIED IN THE WRECKAGE, AND THE COFFIN WITH MY SPIRIT WAS LOST IN THE SEA!"



"FOR I WAS THROWN INTO CONFLICT WITH PROFESSOR **ABRAHAM VAN HELSING**, A MAN AS DEDICATED TO THE CAUSE OF GOOD AND ORDER AS I TO EVIL AND CHAOS! HE LED THE MANHUNT THAT ENDED IN THE BORGO PASS..."



"...WITH MY **DEATH** AT THE HANDS OF VAN HELSING'S FRIENDS: **JONATHAN HARKER**, **DR. SEWARD**, **LORD GOLDALMING** AND **QUINCEY MORRIS**!"

*SEE BRAM STOKER'S NOVEL, **DRACULA**.

"IT SEEMED AT LAST FINAL DOOM HAD COME... UNTIL **SMUGGLERS**, SEEKING LOST BOOTY, DREDGED THE COFFIN FROM THE ICY DEPTHS, AND THEIR MACABRE-MINDED **CAPTAIN** WAS MOVED TO JEST AS **VARNEY** HAD!"



"FOR ANY OF AN EVIL NATURE WHO LIE IN THE COFFIN ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO **MY** WILL, BECOME **HOSTS** TO MY SPIRIT! BUT THAT ALONE DOES NOT MAKE ME THE DRACULA OF OLD..."



"ONLY WHEN MY HOSTS BECOME **VAMPIRES**, AS I WAS, DO MY FULL POWERS RETURN!"

"SO I HAVE SURVIVED THROUGH TO THE PRESENT. SO I OBTAINED THIS HOST-BODY YOU, MY COMPANIONS IN CHAOS'S CULT, KNOW AS **COUNT MORDANTE**. SO I NEVER **CEASED** TO SERVE THE GREATER GLORY OF THE MAD GOD..."





... AND I HAVE NEVER SERVED HIM BETTER THAN IN PRESENTING *THIS* GIRL TO HIM AS HIS BRIDE!

IT WILL BE YEARS, PERHAPS *CENTURIES*, BEFORE THE TIME, THE CONDITIONS, ARE AGAIN *RIGHT* TO BRING FORTH A CHILD OF CHAOS...

THERE MUST BE NO *MISTAKE!* THE CHOSEN ONE MUST BE *SUPERIOR* TO MERE MORTALS... AS IS THIS MAID OF *DRAKULON!*

NO! YOU WISH IT TO BE ONE OF YOUR CHOOSING SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHARE THE POWER AND LEADERSHIP OF THE CULT!

NO ONE IS MORE DEVOTED TO CHAOS THAN I! THE HONOR MUSN'T GO TO THIS *OUTSIDER*... IT SHOULD BE MINE! *MINE!*



SILENCE, WOMAN! I ALONE HAVE LOOKED ON THE FACE OF CHAOS, I ALONE TRULY KNOW HIS WANTS, HIS NEEDS... THAT IS WHY I AM *SUPREME LEADER* OF THE CULT!

AND YOUR LEADER TELLS YOU THE MATTER IS *SETTLED!*



VAMPIRELLA SHALL BE *BRIDE OF CHAOS!* SHE SHALL BEAR THE CHILD WHO WILL RETURN THE *ANCIENT WAYS*... WHO SHALL PLUNGE EARTH *BACK* TO THE DAYS BEFORE THE FORCE OF *ORDER* HELD SWAY!



THIS IS AS FAR AS I TAKE YOU, SIGNOR VAN HELSING... THERE STANDS THE CASTLE OF **COUNT MORDANTE!** A CHILLING THING TO VIEW IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT-- BUT I **FORGET**, YOU CANNOT SEE.

YOU **ALSO** FORGET THE LARGE SUM I PAID YOU INCLUDED BEING **ROWED** TO THE ISLAND.



THAT WAS OVER. DRINKS AT THE **INN**, SIGNOR! OUT HERE IN THE **CHILL**, STORIES HEARD OF **GOINGS-ON** IN THAT PLACE RACING THROUGH ONE'S MIND...



... A MAN COMES TO HIS **SENSES!** HE SEES THE WISDOM OF--



OF RECONSIDERING BEFORE HE CHEATS A BLIND MAN?



AH, MR. PENDRAGON. YOU HAVE BEEN MOST **PATIENT**. MY BUSINESS IN SERVICE OF **CHAOS** IS ENDED FOR THE MOMENT...



THERE IS TIME FOR MORE **PERSONAL** PLEASURES... SUCH AS AN EVENING **MEAL!** AND SINCE I NO LONGER **NEED** YOU...

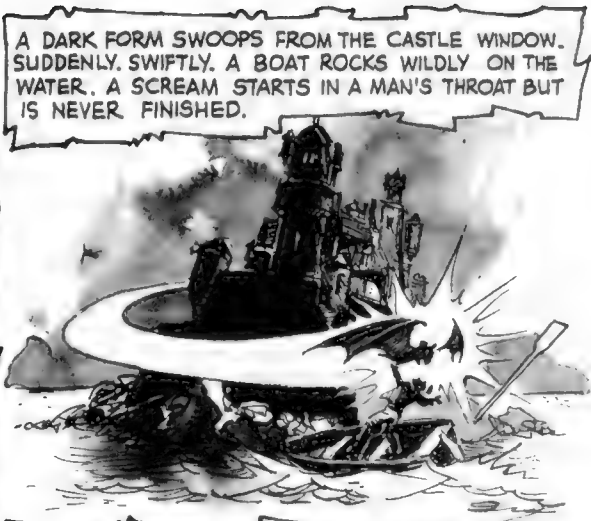


BUT **WAIT**. IF THAT **SOUND** DRIFTING UP FROM THE LAKE MEANS WHAT I **THINK**--



YES, MR. PENDRAGON.
YOU HAVE A
REPRIEVE.

IT APPEARS
THIS WILL BE A
TIME FOR PERSONAL
PLEASURES
INDEED!



A DARK FORM SWOOPS FROM THE CASTLE WINDOW.
SUDDENLY, SWIFTLY, A BOAT ROCKS WILDLY ON THE
WATER. A SCREAM STARTS IN A MAN'S THROAT BUT
IS NEVER FINISHED.

AND THE LAKE IS SILENT ONCE MORE.

CONRAD VAN HELSING FLATTENS BACK INTO THE SHADOWS AS THOUGH WISHING THE COLD STONE AT HIS BACK COULD ENVELOP HIM. HE CANNOT SEE THE NIGHTED SHAPE CROSSING THE FACE OF THE MOON, BUT THE SOUND OF LEATHERY WINGS IS LIKE THUNDER TO HIS KEENLY DEVELOPED HEARING...



...THEN IT IS GONE. AND VAN HELSING IS ALONE. A MAN WITHOUT SIGHT ABOUT TO STORM A CASTLE.



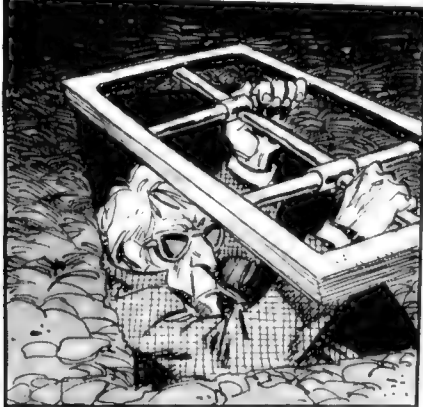
RUSHING WATER
AHEAD. IF IT'S SOME
SORT OF **DRAIN...**

MEANWHILE, IN THE GREAT CAVERN BENEATH THE LAKE, VAMPIRELLA STRAINS AT THE SHACKLES BINDING HER...IN VAIN. POWERLESS TO TAKE BAT-FORM WHILE BOUND, SHE CAN ONLY STRUGGLE AND STARE AT THE SYMBOL ON THE WALL BEFORE HER, WHICH HAS BEGUN TO PULSE AND GLOW, SHAPING AND PUSHING AT THE SURROUNDING DARKNESS...

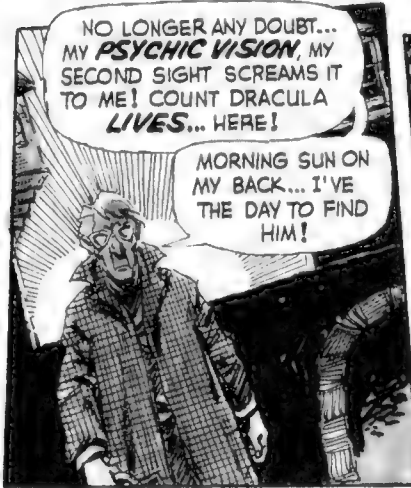


AND IN THAT DARKNESS... SOMETHING **STIRS.**

FINGERS SLIPPERY FROM FUMBLING AGAINST NITRATE-CRUSTED DRAIN WALLS FIGHT TO GRIP THE HOLES OF A GRATE. RUSTED IRON SCRAPES ACROSS DANK COBBLESTONE...



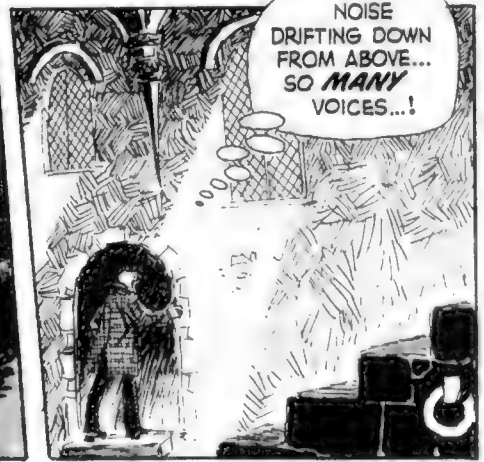
...AND CONRAD VAN HELSING ENTERS CASTLE MORDANTE.



NO LONGER ANY DOUBT... MY **PSYCHIC VISION**, MY SECOND SIGHT SREAMS IT TO ME! COUNT DRACULA LIVES... HERE!

MORNING SUN ON MY BACK... I'VE THE DAY TO FIND HIM!

BUT THE CASTLE IS VAST, SPRAWLING... AND **SUNSET** COMES QUICKLY AMID THE THRUSTING ALPS.



NOISE DRIFTING DOWN FROM ABOVE... SO **MANY** VOICES...!

AND THOSE VOICES **SWELL** AS VAN HELSING MOVES THROUGH THE CASTLE PROPER, SEARCHING, SLOWLY SEARCHING. NO ONE ELSE WALKS THE LABYRINTHINE HALLS. ALL OTHERS ARE IN THEIR ROOMS... **CHANTING**. A CHANT BEGUN SINCE DRACULA DISMISSED THEM THE PREVIOUS NIGHT. A CHANT THAT CONTINUES THROUGH THE DAY, GROWING, BUILDING...



...REACHING DEEP INTO THE GREAT CAVERN, BRIDAL CHAMBER OF **CHAOS!** AND HERE HIS SYMBOL NO LONGER MERELY GLOWS, BUT **PULSES** WITH A BLINDING, RADIATING **ENERGY** IN RHYTHM WITH THE CHANT. A RHYTHM BECOMING EVER MORE STRONGER, EVER MORE POWERFUL...



UNTIL EVEN THE RAVEN-TRESSED FIGURE ON THE ALTAR BEGINS TO SLOWLY, INVOLUNTARILY, UNDULATE TO ITS BEAT.

AND FOR CONRAD VAN HELSING THE CHANT IS A THROBBING IRRITANT, **DULLING** THE PYSCHIC EMANATIONS HE HOPED WOULD GUIDE HIM, **SLOWING** HIS SEARCH, AS OUTSIDE DAYLIGHT DIMS AND SHADOWS GROW LONG. THEN...



HERE! THE EVIL HIS PRESENCE GENERATES STRIKES AT MY SENSES LIKE A LIVING THING!



AND HE'S NOT YET **AWAKENED!** THERE'S STILL **TIME!**

TIME TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT NO MATTER **HOW** HE'S MANAGED TO RETURN TO PLAGUE MANKIND...



COUNT **DRACULA** **DIES!**



W-WHAT...? NO **BLOOD** FLOWS FROM THE WOUND...!



UNLIKE **VIRTUE**, DR. VAN HELSING, SERVING CHAOS IS **NOT** ITS OWN REWARD...



FOR BEING THE ONE TO PROVIDE HIM WITH HIS NEEDED **BRIDE**, CHAOS LAST NIGHT GRANTED ME A MOST USEFUL FAVOR... **IMMUNITY TO THE STAKE!**

I **COULD** HAVE SLAIN YOU AS YOU FIRST COVERED AGAINST THE CASTLE RAMPARTS, DOCTOR... BUT WAITING UNTIL **THIS** MOMENT SEEMED INFINITELY MORE **AMUSING!**



YOU'VE **PLANNED** ALL THIS...!

AS THE GIRL FOLLOWED PENDRAGON, SO I KNEW **YOU** WOULD FOLLOW **HER!**

IN CHOOSING **VAMPIRELLA** TO BE THE GREAT GOD'S BRIDE I SERVED **MYSELF** AS WELL AS CHAOS! I ATTAIN MY GREATEST POWER EVER AND EXTINGUISH THE LINE OF MY MOST HATED ENEMY!



BUT AS VAMPIRELLA TENSES AGAINST THE FINAL ONSLAUGHT OF DRACULA, A WILD LIGHT FILLS THE CAVERN WHERE ONCE SHE WAS PRISONER. AND OUT ITS THROBBING BRILLIANCE, A SHADOW GROWS, UNTILL IT FALLS ACROSS THE WHITE, SHAPELY FORM OF LUCRETIA.



TINGLING WITH AWE AND ANTICIPATION OF A MOMENT SHE HAS DREAMED OF, PLANNED FOR, THE PRIESTESS OF THE CULT OF CHAOS LIFTS HER HEAD...

[illegible]

E *

MY CHEST! WHERE
THE STAKE WAS
DRIVEN---NOOOOOO!!

SOMETHING **HAPPENED** DOWN THERE... SOMETHING TO CHEAT CHAOS OF TAKING HIS **BRIDE**, OF BRINGING A **CHILD** INTO THIS WORLD...!

VAMPIRELLA... WE'D BEST GET **OUT** OF HERE! THE WRATH OF A CHEATED AND **FRUSTRATED** GOD...

VAMPIRELLA... WE'D
BEST GET **OUT** OF
HERE! THE WRATH OF A
CHEATED AND
FRUSTRATED
GOD...

...WILL BE GREAT INDEED!"





AND AS THREE FIGURES PLUNGE INTO THE ICY BLACK GRIP OF THE ALPINE LAKE...



... **CHAOS** RETURNS TO HIS PLACE OF BANISHMENT, LEAVING A **MONUMENT** OF HIS RAGE AND POWER...



EPILOGUE: THE CLIMATE OF THE CARNIC ALPS IS TOO COOL FOR VULTURES. BUT WITH THE COMING OF DAYLIGHT, A **HUMAN SCAVENGER** IS ATTRACTED TO THE SCENE OF DEVASTATION...

FOR A TIME HE STRIPS CORPSES OF JEWELS, OF MONEY, THEN SOMETHING GLEAMING AND BLACK CATCHES HIS PRACTICED EYE ... A **COFFIN**, WITH A FINE, ORNATE CREST ON ITS LID...

AND AS HE STARES AT THIS NEW PRIZE, A SUDDEN **THOUGHT** TOUCHES HIS BRUTE MIND: WHAT A FINE JEST TO **LIE** IN THAT COFFIN A MOMENT, TO SHOW HIS CONTEMPT FOR DEATH AND THE DEAD...



THE END... FOR NOW





THERE'S NO TRACE OF THE OTHER. WE'VE SEARCHED HIGH AND LOW.

SO BE IT, MY CHILDREN. LET US LEAVE THIS CURSED PLACE. SET FIRE TO THE WRETCHED HOVEL AND LET THE FLAMES PURIFY AND PURGE THE TAINT OF SIN.



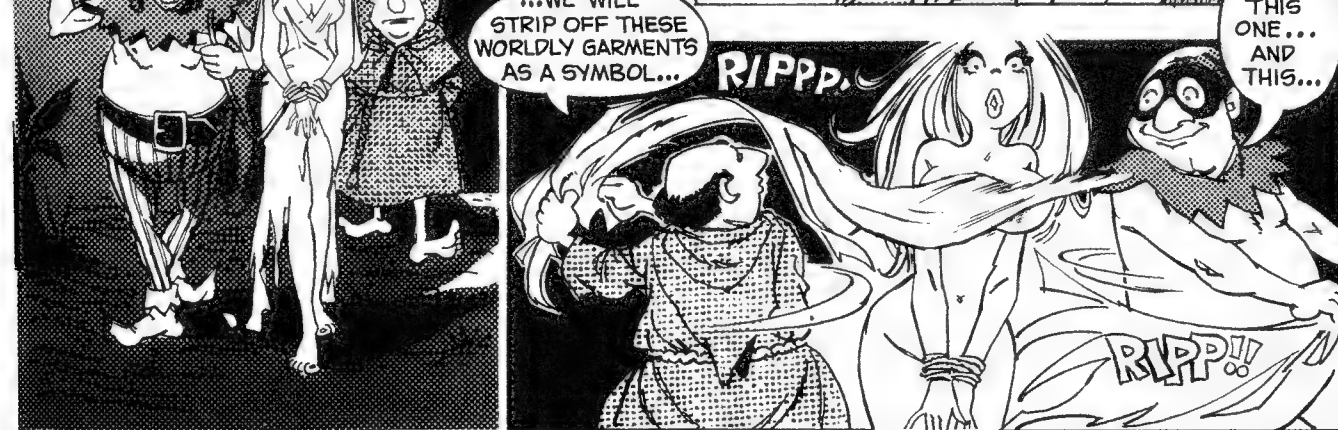
...AND MAY YOUR BODY BE CONSUMED BY FIRE SO THAT YOUR PURIFIED SOUL MAY SOAR FREE TO FIND PEACE ETERNAL...

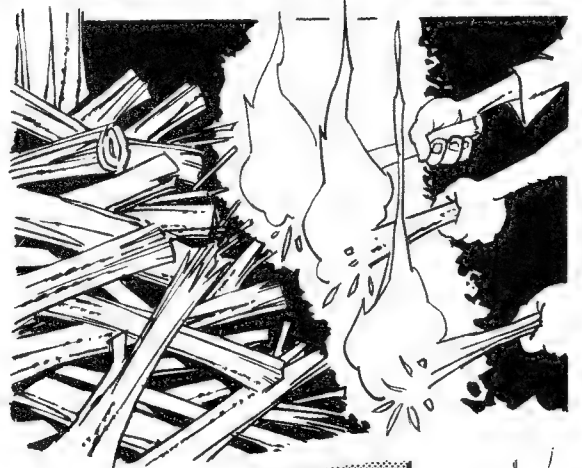


...WE WILL STRIP OFF THESE WORLDLY GARMENTS AS A SYMBOL...

RIPPP.

...AND THIS ONE... AND THIS...







MONKEY SEE,
MONKEY DO. TAG
ALONG. WE'RE GOING
ON A SAFARI TO
WITNESS SOME REAL
GORILLA THEATRE!

GORILLA MY DREAMS

HE FELT THE HOT FOUL BREATH
BLOWING SWEAT AT HIS BACK...
THEN THE MIGHTY CLAWS
TEARING ACROSS HIS CHEST...
AND THE SCREAMS... THAT
WOULD NOT COME...



AGONY SURGED THROUGH HIM AS THE
BEAST SANK ITS FANGS IN HIS THROAT!



YAAHHHHHHHHH...

YAAHHH!
OH MY GOD!

YES, MARK EVANS... **SCREAM!** NOW-WHILE
YOUR HEART POUNDS LIKE A TOM-TOM...
NOW THAT YOU'RE...



... AWAKE!

GOOD LORD!
THAT DREAM! THAT
DREAM ALL OVER AGAIN!
AND... AND EVERY NIGHT
IT... IT SEEMS MORE
REAL!

COME BACK
TO SLEEP, MARK. WE'LL
BE DOCKING IN ENGLAND
TOMORROW. ONCE YOU'RE
HOME... AMONG FAMILIAR
SURROUNDINGS... YOU'LL NO
LONGER BE TROUBLED
BY THESE NIGHTMARES...
I JUST **KNOW** IT!

IT'S NO GOOD, DARLING.
I'M CURSED! CURSED BY
THOSE MONSTERS! THEY
HATE ME, DARLING! THEY
WANT YOU BACK AND THEY'LL
LEAVE ME NO PEACE
UNTIL I DIE!



IT WAS ONLY THREE MONTHS AGO WHEN
WE SET OUT TO EXPLORE THE UPPER
CONGO... WHO COULD HAVE FORESEEN THEN
THE STRANGE EVENTS THAT WOULD BEFALL...

WE'LL CAMP HERE
FOR THE NIGHT, M'BATU.
TOMORROW WE'LL
START THE PORTAGE
INLAND.

NATIVE BOYS
MUCH 'FRAID,
BWANA... THEY
SAY TABOO HERE!
THEY SAY THIS LAND
OF DEVIL BEAST...
SHAGATHA...
MUCH 'FRAID,
BWANA!



IF ONLY WE HAD LISTENED THEN...
IF ONLY WE COULD HAVE KNOWN...
THE DANGER... THE EVIL EYES THAT
WATCHED US...

SUPERSTITIOUS
NONSENSE, M'BATU!
THERE IS NO DEVIL BEAST,
SHAGATHA OR WHATEVER
YOU CALL IT THAT CAN
STAND UP TO SIX
GAUGE ELEPHANT
GUNS!

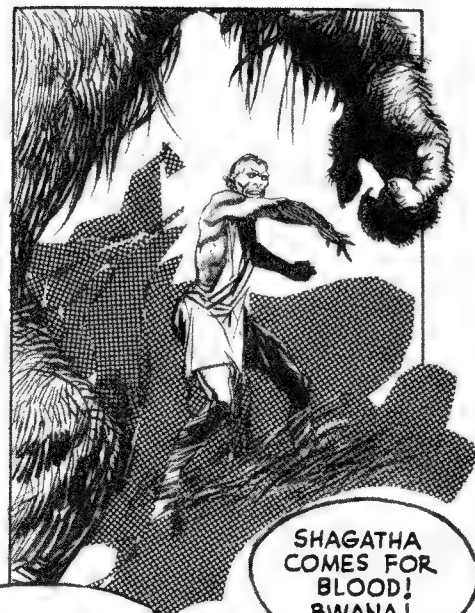
SEED OF TRUTH! A
TRIBAL WASHER WOMAN
SCARED BY HER SHADOW...
AND ANOTHER LEGEND IS
BORN! KATU! HEAD
UPSTREAM WHERE THE
WATER HASN'T BEEN
MUDDIED AND FILL SOME
JUGS FOR CAMP.

STILL... I'D
HAVE MY GUARD UP,
EVANS... THERE'S USUALLY
A SMALL SEED OF TRUTH
BEHIND EVERY SUPER
STITION, YOU KNOW!



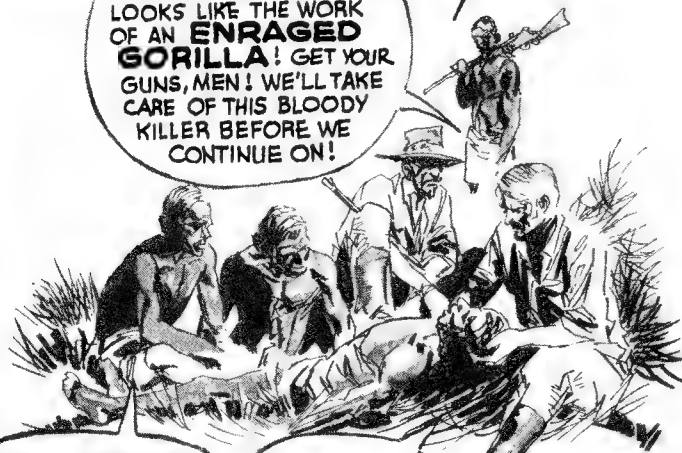


FEAR DRIVES THE NATIVE FORWARD...
FEAR THAT THESE FEW FUTILE STEPS
ARE HIS LAST!



SHAGATHA
COMES FOR
BLOOD!
BWANA!

THE MARKS ON HIS
CHEST... HIS THROAT...
LOOKS LIKE THE WORK
OF AN **ENRAGED**
GORILLA! GET YOUR
GUNS, MEN! WE'LL TAKE
CARE OF THIS BLOODY
KILLER BEFORE WE
CONTINUE ON!



TABOO GROUND,
BWANA! SHAGATHA
HERE!

POOR DEVIL...
GOD REST HIS
SOUL!

BEHIND EVERY
SUPERSTITION
THERE IS A SEED
OF TRUTH!



THE TRACKS
ARE UNMISTAKABLE!
THAT DEVIL PASSED THIS
WAY... WE SHOULD HAVE
HIM BEFORE ANOTHER
NIGHTFALL!

GOD... THAT FIEND IS
SMART! DOUBLED BACK TO
THE RIVER TO LOSE THE TRACKS!
LET'S SPLIT UP, SMYTHE. YOU
TAKE A FEW MEN DOWNSTREAM...
WE'LL COVER **THIS** BANK...
SEE IF WE CAN'T
PICK UP HIS
TRAIL!

RIGHT!

THE PALE LIGHT OF THE
RISING AFRICAN MOON
SILENTLY BLOTS FROM THE
SKY AS A SINISTER SILHOUETTE
FALLS ACROSS THE HUNTERS.

grrrrr...



SMYTHE'S PARTY IS PICKED CLEAN...ONE BY ONE...
LIKE SMALL DEFENSELESS TIN SOLDIERS...

MY GOD!
SHAGATHA! THE
NATIVES WERE
RIGHT! OH
MY GOD!





MY GOD!
WE'VE GOT
TO FIND THE
FIEND THAT
DID THIS!

SUDDENLY..... A SHRILL
SCREAM PIERCES THE STILL
JUNGLE AIR!

GIRL
SCREAM!

YOU'RE RIGHT!
MY GOD! THAT
WAS A WOMAN'S
VOICE! COME
ON!



THEN!

HELP ME!
PLEASE!
OH, PLEASE
DON'T LET
THEM
GET ME!



FIRE!
KILL THE BRUTES!
QUICKLY... BEFORE
THEY GET TOO CLOSE
TO THE GIRL!



AT CAMP... FURTHER UP THE RIVER ...EVENING FALLS.

AFTER THE SOUNDS OF GUN FIRE
ECHO IN THE NOW SILENT JUNGLE...

THANK
GOD!

STRANGE...THESE
ANIMALS LOOK
MORE HORRIFIED
THAN ENRAGED!

WE'VE CHASED THE REST
OF THEM OFF! YOU'RE ALL
RIGHT NOW, MISS! M'BATU...
LET'S CLEAR OUT OF
HERE FAST! NO TELLING
WHEN THEY'LL RETURN!



MY BEARERS REPORT
THEY HAVEN'T BEEN
ABLE TO FIND A SINGLE
SURVIVOR FROM YOUR
PARTY. YOU'RE QUITE
LUCKY, MISS, THAT WE
HAPPENED TO BE IN
THE AREA WHEN
WE DID!

OH,
MARK!



THREE WEEKS LATER... NAIROBI!

BWANA... BOYS SAY GIRL TABOO! SAY DEVIL BEASTS WANT THE GIRL. LET HER GO, BWANA EVANS... TABOO!

FORGET THAT SUPERSTITIOUS DRIVEL, M'BATU! EVA'S A FINE AND SENSITIVE GIRL. SHE'S COMING HOME WITH ME AND WHAT'S MORE... WE'RE GOING TO BE MARRIED ON SHIP!

THE SECOND DAY OUT...

IT HAPPENED AGAIN LAST NIGHT, EVA! EVER SINCE WE LEFT AFRICA... THAT SAME AWFUL NIGHTMARE! I CAN'T GET THOSE BEASTS OUT OF MY MIND!... AND... AS ALWAYS... I SENSE YOUR PRESENCE IN THE DREAM!

NIGHT, AFTER HARROWING NIGHT, EVAN'S STRANGE NIGHTMARES MOUNT TO EVER HIGHER PEAKS OF MENTAL AGONY.



THOSE GORILLAS WERE CRAZED! AS IF SOMETHING WAS DRIVING THEM ON! THEY WANTED YOU BADLY... I WAS THE ONE WHO TOOK YOU AWAY... WHY? WHY WOULD DUMB BRUTES ACT WITH SUCH PURPOSE... SUCH DETERMINATION?

PLEASE MARK, THE VOYAGE IS NEARLY OVER... I KNOW YOU'LL FIND PEACE ONCE WE'RE IN ENGLAND!

A HOTEL ROOM IN LONDON...

WE'RE IN ENGLAND AT LAST, DARLING... IT'S OVER NOW! ALL THE WAITING... BOTH YOURS AND MINE!

WHAT'S THAT, EVA? WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOURS AND MINE?

AN OMINOUS SOUND GROWS IN EVA'S VOICE... A LOW, BEAST-LIKE GROWL!

YES, DARLING... YOU SEE THE GORILLAS WERE NOT THE DEVIL BEASTS... **SHAGATHA** YOU THOUGHT THEY WERE... YOU FOUGHT THEM... KILLED THEM... DROVE THEM OFF... WHEN ALL THEY WANTED WAS TO HELP YOU...



WHEN ALL THEY WERE TRYING TO DO WAS PREVENT THE DEVIL BEAST FROM ENTERING YOUR PARTY... FROM LEAVING THE CONGO... FROM FINDING NEW HUNTING GROUNDS... TENDER BWANA BODIES... SOFT LAND OF WHITE HUNTERS!

OH MY GOD! THOSE DREAMS... YOU!... **AARRRGH!**

BEHIND EVERY LEGEND... A SEED OF TRUTH!

MONKEY ON YOUR BACK? SEE... ONE DAY YOUR DREAMS WILL COME TRUE! EVA WAS A REAL BACK-BREAKER, AL RIGHT. HUG YOU TO DEATH, BWANA BABY!



THE END

CAPTAIN RHODES' FINGER
TIGHTENED ON THE REGULATION
FIREARM... BUT HE WAS UNABLE
TO *SHOOT!*

WHAT'S BLACK
AND WHITE AND
RED ALL OVER?
NO, IT'S *NOT* A
NEWSPAPER! IF
YOU WANT TO
KNOW THE
ANSWER TO THIS
WRETCHED
RIDDLE, JUST
ASK THE...



girl on the red asteroid

IF I DON'T
FIRE *NOW*...
THAT THING
WILL *KILL*
ME!

THE
PISTOL
WAS
FULLY
CHARGED,
BUT IT
WAS LIKE
A *TOY* IN
HIS
WAVERING
HAND!

BUT I
CAN'T!
I *CAN'T*
FIRE!

I SHOULD
HAVE SHOT
IT WHEN I
HAD THE
CHANCE!
BUT NOT
NOW! NOT
AFTER
WHAT'S
HAPPENED!

IT WAS *MY* FAULT OUR FUEL RAN LOW! I SHOULD NEVER HAVE TAKEN THE SHIP ON A *PLEASURE CRUISE*!!

WHAT *IS* IT, RHODES?

WE'RE OUT OF *FUEL*!



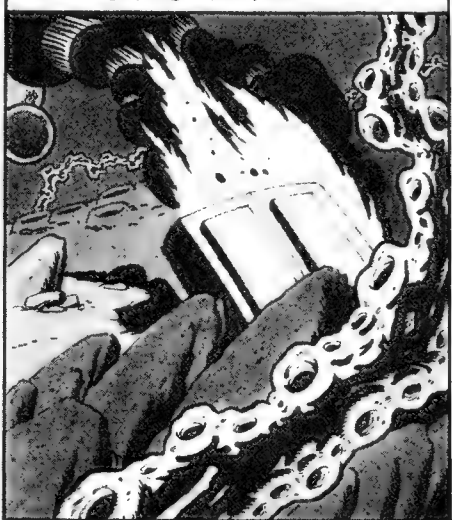
THERE WAS *NOTHING* WE COULD DO! I KNEW IT WAS *HOPELESS*! THROUGH THE PORTS I SAW THE LARGE HUNK OF RED ROCK LOOMING BEFORE US... AND I *FELT* THE SHIP *TEARING* APART AS WE SKIMMED ACROSS THE ASTEROID'S SURFACE!!



I HADN'T FIGURED ON BEING SO CLOSE TO THAT *ASTEROID*!

THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL IS DRAWING THE SHIP *TOWARD* IT!!

I THOUGHT I WAS *DEAD* AFTER THE CRASH! UNTIL THE HEAT OF THE ROARING *INFERNO* BROUGHT ME TO CONSCIOUSNESS!



I STAGGERED TO MY FEET TO FIND...

MCCLELLAND... GOFF... STEPHENS... ALL *DEAD*!!

... *BECAUSE OF ME*!!



ONLY *I* SURVIVED! BUT I NO LONGER *CARED* WHAT HAPPENED TO ME!! WITHOUT PUTTING ON A HELMET OR OXOPACK, I DRAGGED THE REMAINS OF MY *CREWMEN* FROM THE BLAZING SHIP!

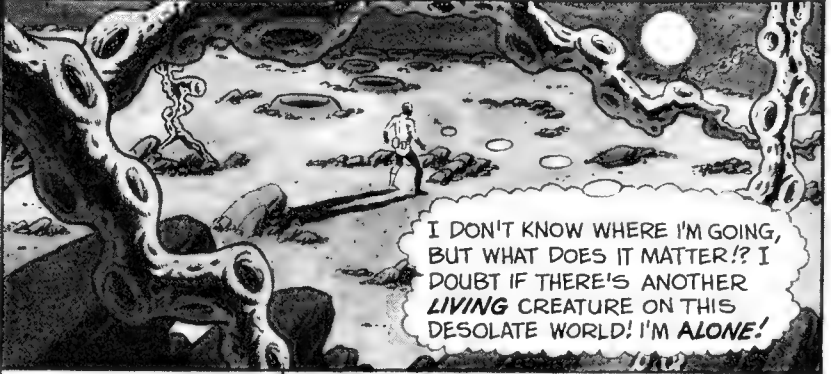


BUT THERE HADN'T BEEN A FORMAL **FUNERAL** IN MY SOLAR SYSTEM FOR A QUARTER OF A CENTURY! I'D FORGOTTEN THE WORDS!!

IT'S THE **LEAST** I CAN DO!
I ONLY WISH THERE WAS
SOMETHING APPROPRIATE
I COULD **SAY!**



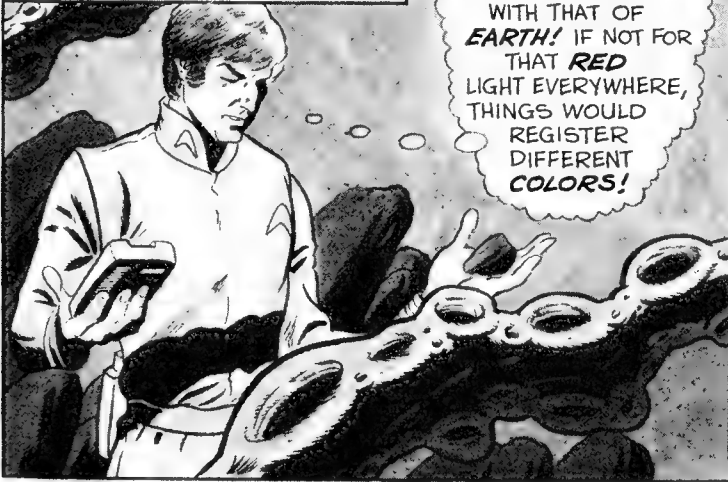
THE ASTEROID WAS A CURIOUS PLACE! THE SUN WAS **RED** AND BATHED EVERYTHING IN A **CRIMSON** LIGHT! EVERYTHING... THE ROCKS, WHAT THERE WAS OF VEGETATION, EVEN MY OWN UNIFORM AND HANDS... WERE THE COLOR OF **PALE BLOOD!!**



I DON'T KNOW WHERE I'M GOING,
BUT WHAT DOES IT MATTER!? I
DOUBT IF THERE'S ANOTHER
LIVING CREATURE ON THIS
DESOLATE WORLD! I'M **ALONE!**

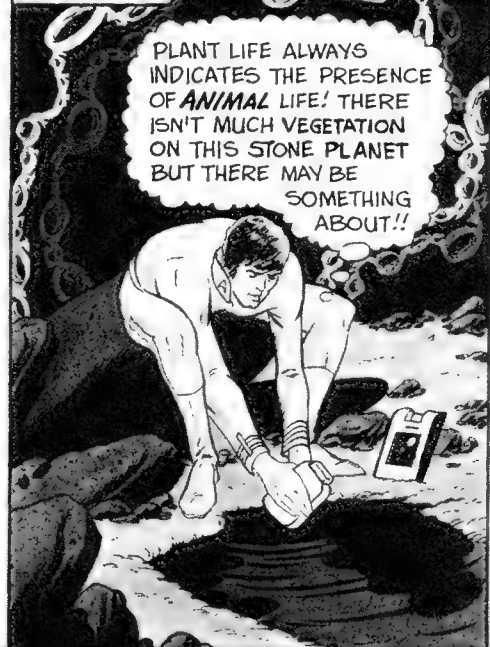
I DRANK FREELY OF THE **BLOOD-LIKE**
WATER! THEN FILLED MY REGULATION
CANTEEN...!

IT REALLY DIDN'T MATTER WHAT
HAPPENED TO ME NOW! TO BREAK
THE MONOTONY, I BEGAN CHECKING
WHAT I ALREADY **KNEW!!**



INSTRUMENTS SHOW
THE ATMOSPHERE IS
VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL
WITH THAT OF
EARTH! IF NOT FOR
THAT **RED**
LIGHT EVERYWHERE,
THINGS WOULD
REGISTER
DIFFERENT
COLORS!

PLANT LIFE ALWAYS
INDICATES THE PRESENCE
OF **ANIMAL** LIFE! THERE
ISN'T MUCH VEGETATION
ON THIS STONE PLANET
BUT THERE MAY BE
SOMETHING
ABOUT!!



I MOVED FORWARD, ENCOUNTERING **NOTHING!** MY
EYES WERE HEAVY FROM LACK OF SLEEP WHEN I
THOUGHT I SAW **SOMETHING** JUST AHEAD OF ME!



THERE
IS
SOME-
THING!

IT LOOKS
LIKE...
LIKE A...

... **RED**
EGG!!



AS I TOUCHED THE ALIEN EGG, IT BEGAN TO **SHAKE...CRACK!!**
INSTANTLY, I DREW MY REGULATION **FIREARM!!**



EXPECTING TO BE THE FIRST MEAL OF A HUGE ALIEN **LIZARD**, I AIMED MY WEAPON! THEN I STOPPED, STUNNED, AS A LONG TRAIL OF **SCARLET HAIR** FELL FROM INSIDE THE EGG!!



I THOUGHT I WAS READY FOR **ANYTHING!** BUT NOT **THIS!** I REPLACED MY BLASTER IN ITS REGULATION HOLSTER AT FIRST SIGHT OF THAT GEORGEOUS RED BASKED **BODY!**



I DIDN'T KNOW IF SHE WAS REAL, OR A **DREAM** BROUGHT ON BY THIS CRAZY **RED** ATMOSPHERE!



I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IT WASN'T AN EGG! MAMMALS DON'T HATCH FROM **EGGS!** SOMEHOW YOU WERE SEALED AWAY IN THAT CAPSULE! JUST AS I'M FREE OF THE CAPSULE WHICH BROUGHT ME **HERE!**

SHE WAS SO **FRAIL!** AND SEEMED SO **INNOCENT!!** I PULLED HER REDDISH BODY **TOWARD** ME! IT HAD BEEN **SO LONG!!**





SHE WAS **SHAKING**... DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO! BUT I **SHOWED** HER! I HAD THE ADVANTAGE!



I THOUGHT I'D BE **ALONE** ON THIS GOD-FORSAKEN ASTEROID...

...BUT NOW THERE'S SOMEONE TO KEEP ME COMPANY! SOMEONE TO HELP ME BREAK THE TERRIBLE MONOTONY OF THIS PLACE...



I'M ACTUALLY **FALLING** FOR YOU! IT'S CRAZY, AT A TIME LIKE THIS... AFTER THE **CRASH**!!

I'M FALLING IN **LOVE** WITH YOU!



SHE WAS MINE FOR A GOOD HOUR! THAT'S WHEN I FELT THE **CHANGE**...

...WHEN THE SHARP POINTS FIRST DUG INTO MY **FLESH**!

WH-WHAT? YOU CLAWED ME! CLAWED--?!



YIIIIII!! W...WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOU?



GOOD LORD! I CAN'T BREAK **FREE**! HER STRENGTH IS **INCREDIBLE**!!

IT WAS **IMPOSSIBLE**, BUT THE GIRL I **LOVED** WAS CHANGING INTO SOMETHING INHUMAN.... ...SOMETHING **REPTILIAN**!! I TRIED TO BREAK AWAY, BUT SHE HAD LEARNED THE ACT OF **EMBRACING**...!

SHE CONTINUED TO CHANGE ... TO **GROW!** MOMENTARILY SHE RELEASED HER GRASP ON ME! AS I TOOK OUT MY **BLASTER**, I SUDDENLY REALIZED WHAT ANY ELEMENTARY SCIENCE STUDENT SHOULD HAVE KNOWN ...

HOW STUPID I'VE BEEN...

THAT CAPSULE **WAS** AN EGG!

THE GEORGEOUS CREATURE THAT HATCHED WAS AN **INFANT...** NOT YET FULLY DEVELOPED!!

JUST AS A HUMAN FETUS DEVELOPS THROUGH VARIOUS STAGES RESEMBLING A FISH, AN AMPHIBIAN, A **REPTILE...**

...SO DID THE ALIEN REPTILE DEVELOP BY TEMPORARILY RESEMBLING A **MAMMAL!**

THE RED MONSTER MOVED TOWARD THE INVITING MORSEL!

CAPTAIN RHODES MADE A FINAL ATTEMPT AT WORKING THE **BLASTER!**

HE COULDN'T!

FOR IN THE HIDE OF THE HUNGRY MONSTROSITY, HE STILL SAW THE **FACE** OF THE GIRL ON THE **RED ASTEROID!**

I CAN'T SHOOT HER! **NOT HER!**

LOOKS LIKE THAT OLD **EGG** WASN'T THE ONLY THING TO **CRACK** UP!! HEH! HEH!!

VAMPIRELLA SEZ :

SOMETIMES I THINK I CAME TO THE PLANET EARTH IN THE WRONG CENTURY! JUST A COUPLE OF HUNDRED YEARS AGO THERE WERE SOME REAL SWINGERS AROUND... LIKE THE DOLL I CALL THE.....



LOVER!

DRYING BLOOD HAD TURNED THE STREETS THE COLOUR OF DULL RUSSET AND THE NIGHT LIGHT RENDERED TERRIFYING SHADOWS AS HUMAN JACKALS VENTURED FROM THEIR SEWER BURROWS....

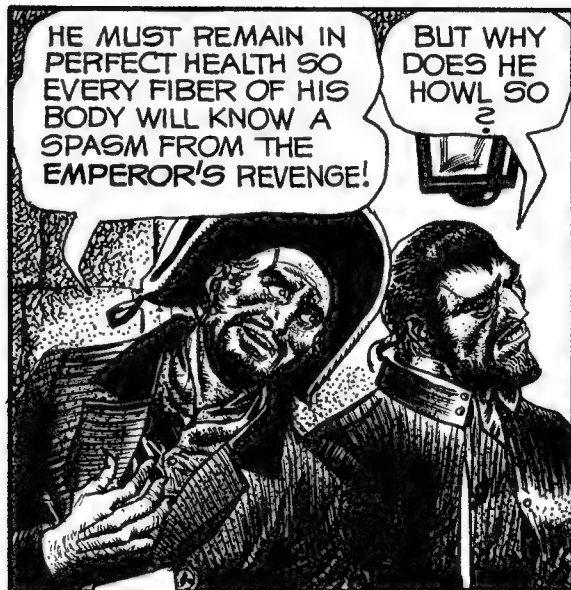
THEN..ALL HEARTS STOPPED..AND ALL MARROW TURNED TO JELLIED ICE AT THE HYSTERICAL WAILS THAT POURED FROM THE TOWER OF CORDRAY PRISON



I'LL DRIVE A SPIKE DOWN HIS THROAT... THAT'LL PUT A STOP TO HIS NIGHTLY BELLOWING!

NO.. HE MUST NOT BE HARMED ... BY US!





HE MUST REMAIN IN PERFECT HEALTH SO EVERY FIBER OF HIS BODY WILL KNOW A SPASM FROM THE EMPEROR'S REVENGE!

BUT WHY DOES HE HOWL SO?



"BECAUSE IT IS HIS WANT TO INFLICT PAIN..AND YOU MAY BE SURE THAT EVERY FEMME WITHIN EAR-SHOT IS CRINGING IN TERROR AT THE WAILS OF JEAN RABAT..THE MAN IS SATAN HIMSELF!"



IT ALL BEGAN IN THE BREWING OF THE REVOLUTION! IT WAS THE FOLLY OF THE YOUNG MARQUIS TO DRESS IN THE RAGS OF THE POOR AND TO WALLOW IN THE VULGARITIES OF THE UNDERGROUND...



BUT, SIRE..THERE IS GREAT DANGER IN THIS THING YOU DO!

THIEVES DO NOT STEAL FROM THIEVES, PEPE! A CODE MANY DOMESTICS COULD ADOPT TOWARD THEIR MASTERS!



BESIDES..IT WOULD BE A PITY FOR THIS BRILLIANT MAKE-UP TO BE PLAYED ON LESS THAN THE STAGE OF REALITY!

YES, SIRE!

THE PUTTY NOSE IS MOST EFFECTIVE!

AH! EXCITING! A NIGHT DESIGNED FOR ADVENTURE BY THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS!



THE PROPHETIC WORDS BORE FRUITION..WHEN JEAN RABAT ENTERED THE WOMB OF ANARCHY.. INSTEAD OF THE USUAL RANTING..THE CAVERNS THUNDERED DREADFUL WORDS OF ACCUSATION....

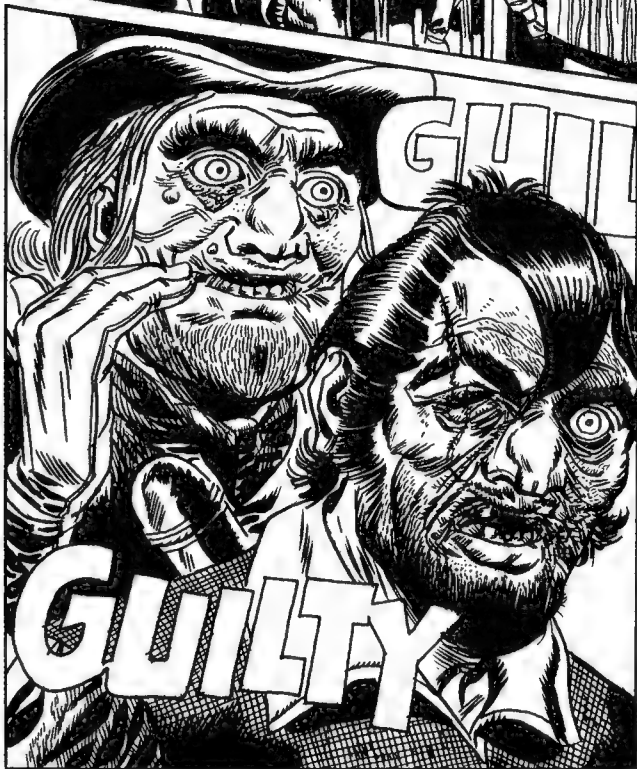



...THERE SHE STANDS..THE ONE WHO WOULD GIVE OUR NECKS TO THE HEADS-MAN!

A YOUNG WOMAN WAS INDICTED FOR BETRAYING THE MOVEMENT TO THE ARISTOCRACY!



SO... I ASK..WHAT IS YOUR VERDICT?





RABAT'S SOUL PULSATED WITH
THE RISE AND FALL OF THE WHIP
..HE WAS ENGULFED IN WAVES
OF BIZARRE INTOXICATION!

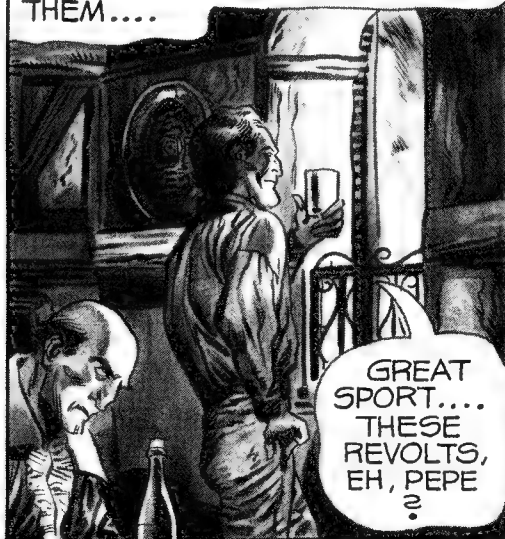
HIS MIND REELING...
HE STAGGERED FROM
THE PLACE! THEN...
A SHADOWED FIGURE
COMMANDED WHAT
HE MUST DO IF HE
WAS TO KNOW
PEACE THIS
NIGHT!

THE
EVIL
DEED
DONE..AN
UNCONTROL-
ABLE HOWL
BELCHED FROM
HIS THROAT...

THEN, JEAN RABAT..KNOWN TO HIS
FELLOW CONSPIRATORS ONLY AS
MONS. MYSTERIE-LAUNCHED INTO
THE REVOLUTION WITH A PASSION!

HIS DENUNCIATION OF THE ARIS-
TOCRACY SCREAMED TO THE
POINT OF ERUPTION..AND WHOLE-
SALE DEATH WAS LOOSED IN THE
STREETS...

MANY DIED IN THOSE WEEKS OF VIOLENCE... BUT MONS. MYSTERIE WAS NOT ONE OF THEM....



INDEED... MONS. MYSTERIE WAS NOT SEEN AGAIN... BUT HE WAS HEARD! HIS OBSCENE SCREAM MEANT THAT SOMEWHERE A GIRL HAD BEEN SENT TO ETERNAL DARKNESS...



THE CITY WAS IN A GRIP OF TERROR.. AND ALL THE FEARS FROM THE SCAVENGERS - THE ASSASSINS THE LOOTERS - PALED BEFORE THE CHILLING HOWL THAT SYMBOLIZED THE VOICE OF EVIL...



BUT IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE EMPEROR'S NEICE MET MONS. MYSTERIE THAT DECISIVE ACTION WAS TAKEN!

THIS OUTRAGE WILL STOP!! OFFER THE NECESSARY BOUNTY TO BRING IN THIS MANIAC!



CURIOUSLY, THE REWARD WAS POSTED JUST AS LOYAL PEPE WAS WEIGHING HIS FUTURE AS A DOMESTIC!



AND SO - THE DOORS
WERE LOCKED ON
MARQUIS JEAN RA-
BAT - MURDERER -
TRAITOR TO HIS
STATION....



IN THAT DAY OF
GUILLOTINE
CHARITY...JEAN'S
EXECUTION WAS
LET TO A DULL AXE!



IT IS TIME,
BEAST!

NO...
MY GOD
NO!



IN KEEPING WITH HIS
EXCELLENCY'S PLEDGE TO
ABOLISH TERROR - WE WILL
THIS DAY - FOREVER SILENCE
THE VILE SCREAMS OF THE
DEMON, JEAN RATBAT!



LET IT
BE DONE!

BUT..THEN AS
THE OFFENDING
HEAD WAS RAISED
ABOVE THE RELIEVED
ASSEMBLY..THE EYES
ROLLED BACK...THE
MOUTH OPENED..AND...



SEE WHAT I MEAN ?
..YOU JUST DON'T HEAR
VICIOUS, SADISTICALLY
LOUD VOICES LIKE THAT
ANYMORE... UNLESS YOU
TURN UP THE VOLUME ON
T.V. !



RAT
BOULETTE



VAMPIRE'S

PROFILE: GONZALEZ



Self-portrait of VAMPIRELLA artist Jose Gonzalez who received the Frazetta Trophy for Best Art in a Warren book.

Jose Gonzalez, Warren Award winner (see VAMPIRELLA #15, pages 48 to 50—ed.) is 31 years old. He has been drawing professionally since 17. Since VAMPIRELLA #12, he has been drawing the VAMPIRELLA series to the delight of her many readers. Gonzalez' favorite comic artist and the one he feels



The one and only VAMPIRELLA by Jose Gonzalez.

has most influenced him is Alex Raymond, creator of FLASH GORDON and RIP KIRBY.

He believes that comics are the best method of developing his artistic abilities. At present Gonzalez sees a serious crisis in comic art due to a lack of good illustrators.

Like other great comics artists, Gonzalez appreciates the relationship between the film and comics mediums.



Cartoon-like VAMPIRELLA was drawn by fan Charles L. Pauly of Charlotte, North Carolina.

ANOTHER NIGHT SHOT By Mary Lou Jurina

For a professional hood, Clif Jackson was quite happy. He had only one more murder to go before becoming a member of CRIME, Inc. He had already murdered four people as his ticket into the organization. He had only one to go. After his date with gorgeous Glory Baynes, he'd find victim number five. During their date, Glory suddenly pulled a gun on Clif and shot him. "Sorry, darling," she said, "but a hard-working slob like you wouldn't understand. I had to meet my deadline for CRIME, Inc. You were my sixth and final victim."



Haunting picture of VAMPIRELLA was sketched by fan Lloyd Fukuki of Honolulu, Hawaii. He said he was inspired by VAMPIRELLA #13.

VAMPIRELLA fan Gurn Lee of Portage, Indiana wrote of...

SPECTRAL VENGEANCE By Gurn Lee

You were murdered in the year 1837, weren't you, Pandora? You remember it well. You were only a lowly 14-year old maid in the manor house of Gerard Helstrum. How were you to know that he was a crazy man and that one night he would take your life by throwing you from one of the many cliffs that bordered the Helstrum mansion. You awoke in the kingdom of the dead, vowing vengeance on Gerard Helstrum for taking your life while you were still so young. The Gods of the world of the dead were many and powerful. They promised you the power to return to the Helstrum mansion and there to murder in cold blood Gerard Helstrum. After all, he thought nothing of taking your own life for sport. You were less than nothing to him in life, just a lowly chamber maid. The Gods of the dead agreed that you would have your revenge, didn't they, Pandora? You were given the strength to return to Helstrum's manor house and he sat there before you, quietly dozing in a heavy, oaken chair before a blazing fireplace. You entered the room in your spirit form, watching his chest heave in sleep. You were ready for him, ready to return the favor.

"Gerard!" You called his name. He sat upright in his chair and looked around. It was then that you took on flesh and confronted your murderer. You buried your hands around his hated throat and strangled him to death. But how were you to know that his spirit would also return, given the same powers of the dead that you had? How were you to know that the two of you were destined to battle each other to the death forever in that house of death.

**SEND THOSE
VAMPIRISH
DRAWINGS &
STORIES TO
VAMPI'S FLAMES**

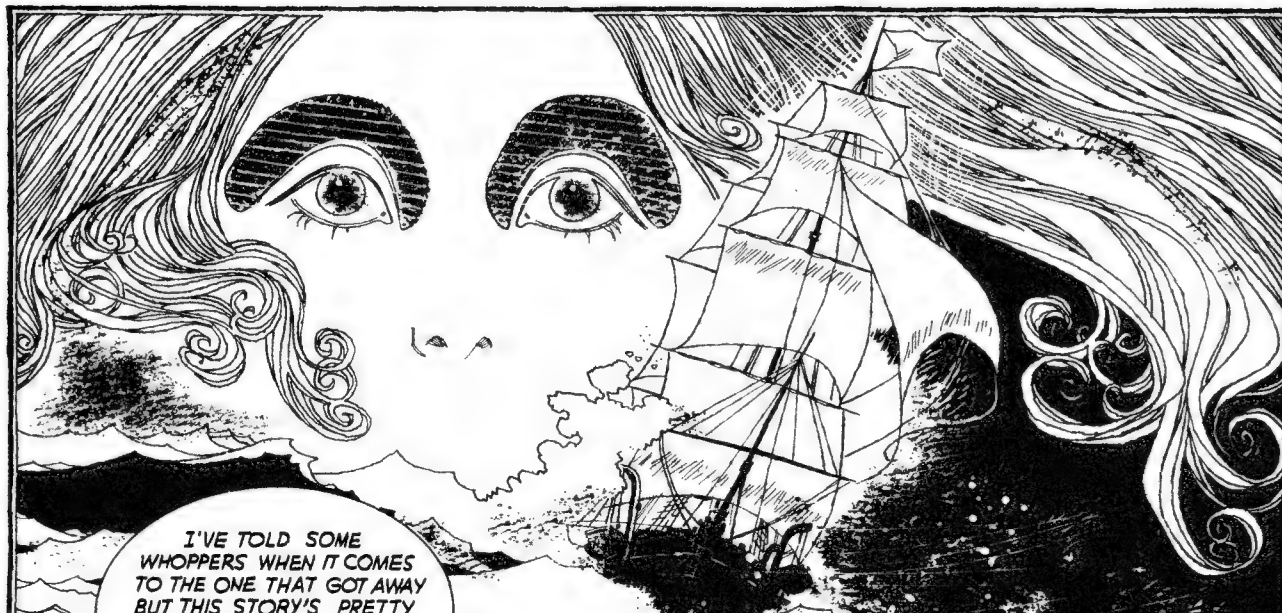


Ink sketch of VAMPIRELLA changing from bat to human form was done by 16-year old Tom Blackshear of Atlanta, Ga.

Galveston, Texas fan Clint Banks tell this tale of a...

VAMPIRE By Clint Banks

I listened hard for the sound of approaching footsteps. I fought my fears for I am a vampire. I have walked the earth for three hundred and fifty years as one of the most damned of all creatures. But tonight my soul will find peace. I have considered taking my own life but there is no wooden stake or silver bullet to end this cursed life. The lust of the vampire is upon me and I feel the urge to kill. I was ready for I had the strength of twelve men and all the powers of the supernatural to aid me. I awaited the coming of my victims. The door burst into pieces and four men came forward. One of them holds a stake and I realize my brain has been confused by blood-lust. I had forgotten the chains which bind my wrists to the brick wall. I am the victim.



I'VE TOLD SOME WHOPPERS WHEN IT COMES TO THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY BUT THIS STORY'S PRETTY FISHY! HERE'S A SCALY TALE OF A FISH OUT OF WATER... WHOSE NAME WAS...

ON APRIL TWELVE OF THE YEAR 1872, THE FREIGHTER "DAVEY JONES" WAS CAUGHT IN A TEMPEST SOMEWHERE BETWEEN ENGLAND AND AFRICA. FOR SIX HOURS, SHE FOUGHT THE STORM BUT EVENTUALLY, SHE WENT DOWN, AND ALL HANDS WERE THOUGHT TO BE LOST. THERE WERE HOWEVER, AT LEAST TWO SURVIVORS- CAPTAIN RAYMOND SPIKE WAS ONE AND I THE OTHER.



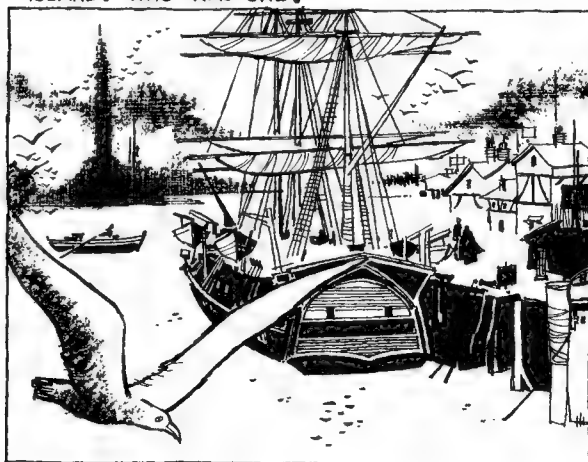
CILIA

WE WERE FOUND ALONG THE AFRICAN SHORE, ABOARD A RAFT, NEARLY TWO WEEKS AFTER THE "DAVEY JONES" HAD GONE TO HER NAMESAKE. I HAD BEEN IN A COMA AND REMEMBERED NOTHING OF THOSE TWO WEEKS AND SPIKE WOULD NOT SPEAK OF IT.



AS I RECUPERATED IN A HOSPITAL IN KENYA, SPIKE SET SAIL FOR HIS HOME IN ENGLAND. WITH HIM HE BROUGHT A GIRL WHOM HE HAD MET AND MARRIED DURING THAT MISSING SEGMENT OF MY LIFE. HE CALLED HER CILIA.

BECAUSE OF CILIA, I REASONED THAT WE HAD NOT SPENT THOSE TWO MYSTERIOUS WEEKS ON THE RAFT ALONE. WHERE HAD HE MET HER? WHAT ISLAND? WHO WAS SHE?



I WAS TO DISCOVER, UPON MY RELEASE FROM THE HOSPITAL, THAT THERE WERE OTHERS WHO WERE ALSO CURIOUS ABOUT THE STRANGE GIRL CALLED CILIA.



LOOK HERE—THAT'S BRINEY SEA WATER AND WHAT'S THEM GREEN PATCHES?

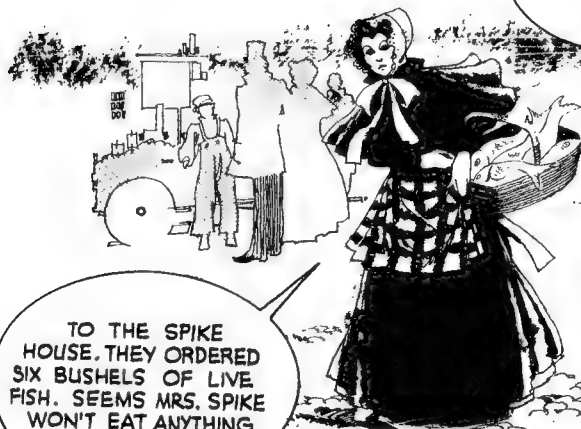
IT'S SEA WEED!

THAT'S A WEIRD ONE.

AYE, WEIRD'S THE WORD. I SAILED WITH THEM FROM AFRICA AND MARK ME SHE AIN'T A MORTAL BEING.

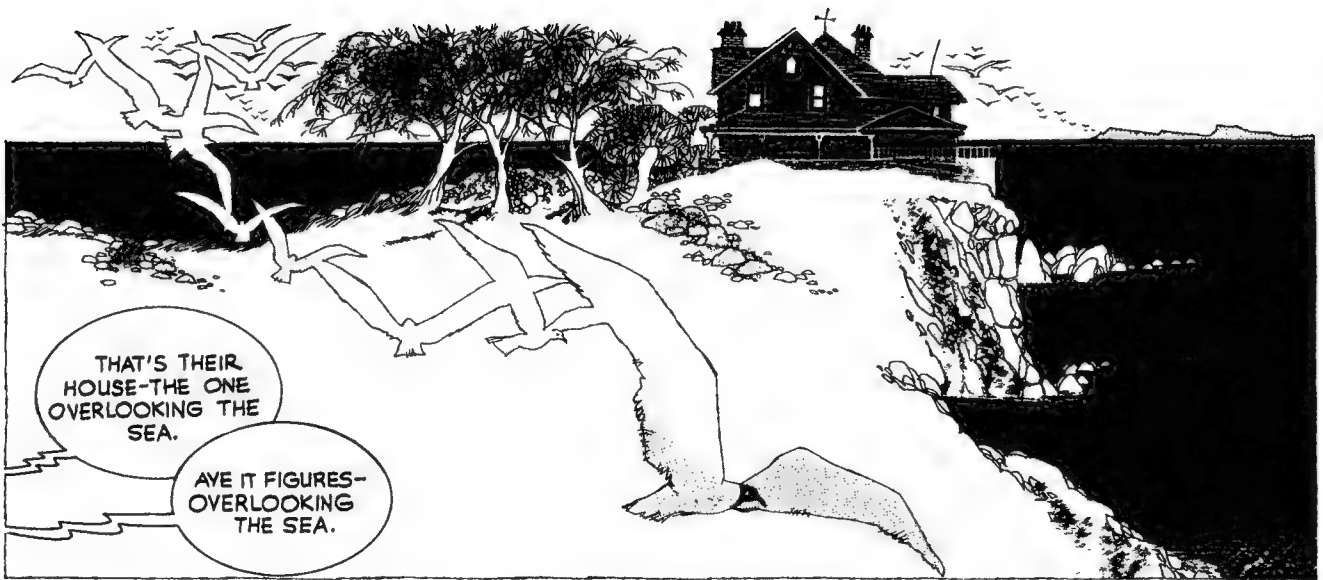
SEVERAL TIMES, SHE DISAPPEARED FROM HER CABIN AND COULDN'T BE FOUND ABOARD. I THOUGHT FOR SURE SHE'D FALLEN OVERBOARD BUT THEN, MAYBE A DAY OR SO LATER SHE'D BE BACK WITH US.

HERE MAGGIE, WHERE YOU GOING WITH THAT?



TO THE SPIKE HOUSE. THEY ORDERED SIX BUSHELS OF LIVE FISH. SEEMS MRS. SPIKE WON'T EAT ANYTHING ELSE.





THAT'S THEIR
HOUSE-THE ONE
OVERLOOKING THE
SEA.

AYE IT FIGURES-
OVERLOOKING
THE SEA.

CAPTAIN SPIKE WROTE TO ME ASKING IF I
HAD REMEMBERED CILIA. I TOLD HIM THAT
I HADN'T AND HE SAID THAT NO ONE ELSE
BUT HE AND I HAD THE RIGHT TO KNOW HER
SECRET AND HE WOULD ONLY TELL IT TO
ME IN PERSON.



COME AWAY
FROM THE WINDOW
CILIA, AND WE'LL TAKE
A WALK BY THE SEA.



I RECEIVED A LETTER
FROM YOUNG ZACKERY. HE'LL
BE VISITING US SOON. HE
KNOWS OF YOU BUT HE DOESN'T
REMEMBER YOU OR WHAT
YOU DID FOR HIM.

HE WAS VERY
ILL. I'M GLAD THAT MY
POTIONS KEPT HIM ALIVE
UNTIL WE REACHED
AFRICA.

DON'T GO
SO FAR... I... I
DON'T...

RAYMOND, I'VE
STAYED AWAY TOO
LONG. I FEEL SO WEAK
IT WILL FEEL GOOD TO
REPLENISH MY
STRENGTH IN THE
BITTER WATERS.

NOT FAR AWAY.



YOU NEEDN'T FEAR,
MY HUSBAND. I'M NOT
GOING HOME. MY HOME
IS WITH YOU AS IT SHALL
ALWAYS BE.

CAN YOU
SEE HER?

YEAH. SHE'S
COMING OUT OF
THE WATER NOW
AND... OH GOD! NO!
IT CAN'T.....!



IT WILL BE DAYLIGHT IN A COUPLE OF HOURS AND I DON'T WANT ANYONE TO SEE US HERE SO WE'D BEST BE GETTING BACK TO THE HOUSE.

OF COURSE.

WHAT IS THIS?

WE'RE JUST FISHERMEN OUT TO CATCH US A MERMAID! WE SAW HER, CAPTAIN AND WE KNOW THAT SHE AIN'T FIT TO LIVE ON LAND.

BUT NEITHER THE CAPTAIN NOR HIS WIFE WERE TO REACH HOME THAT NIGHT.



THAT EVENING, I HAD ARRIVED TO VISIT THE CAPTAIN. NOT FINDING HIM HOME, I WENT FOR A WALK ON THE BEACH AND THERE I SAW HIM LYING UNCONSCIOUS ON THE WET SAND.

ZACKERY!

EASY CAPTAIN, THAT'S A WICKED BRUISE. YOU'VE BEEN CALLING FOR CILIA WHILE YOU WERE DAZED. WHO IS SHE? WHERE IS SHE FROM?

THEY'VE TAKEN HER. AFTER I TELL YOU HER STORY, YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME FIND HER.

I'LL HELP. YOU KNOW THAT.



AFTER THE "DAVEY JONES" WENT UNDER, THE ONLY PIECE OF HER LEFT WAS A SECTION OF HER FLOORING. WE DRIFTED ON THAT FLOORING FOR DAYS WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER AND YOU IN A STATE OF SHOCK.

THEN ONE DAY, I HEARD THE SOUND OF A WOMAN WEeping AND THERE IN THE FOG I SAW A FAINT SILHOUETTE. SHE HAD BEEN LOST IN THE SAME STORM THAT HAD CAST US ADRIFT.

THE FOG PARTED AS WE DRIFTED CLOSER AND THE FIRST TIME THAT I SAW MY BELOVED CILIA. I WAS REVULSED IN HORROR



AHOY THERE!
ARE YOU
INJURED?

NO.
JUST LOST.
PLEASE HELP
ME.



NO!

DON'T BE
FRIGHTENED, MORTAL.
I AM A GENTLE SEA
CREATURE. I AM A
CILOPHYTE. MY PEOPLE
HAVE SAVED MANY OF
YOURS FROM
DROWNING.

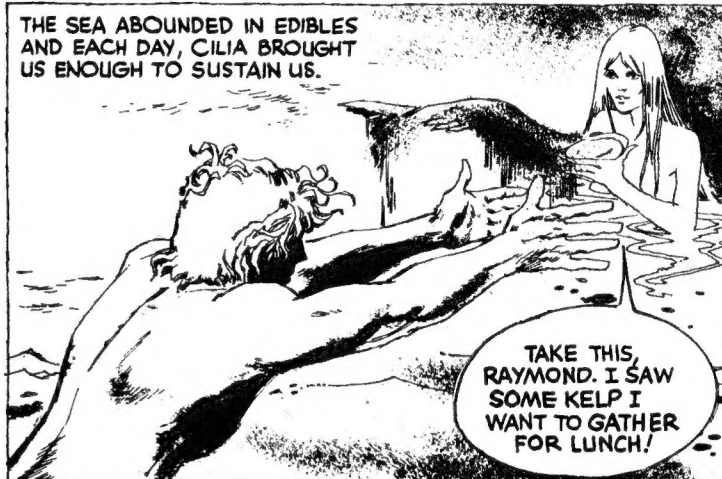
I BELIEVE THE
BOY HAS A CONCUSSION
AND POSSIBLY A FEVER.

AND SHE SPOKE THE TRUTH.
NEVER WAS THERE A MORE
GENTLE CREATURE THAN
MY CILIA.

I HAVE POTIONS
THAT WILL HELP HIM
AND I'LL GATHER FOOD
FROM THE OCEAN.



THE SEA ABOUNDED IN EDIBLES
AND EACH DAY, CILIA BROUGHT
US ENOUGH TO SUSTAIN US.



TAKE THIS,
RAYMOND. I SAW
SOME KELP I
WANT TO GATHER
FOR LUNCH!

EVENUALLY THE RAFT CARRIED
US TO THE AFRICAN SHORE.



YOU'VE
FOUND YOUR HOME
BUT I AM STILL
HOPELESSLY LOST

THEN
STAY WITH ME
AND MAKE MY
HOME YOUR
HOME.



YOU SEE, WE OWE HER OUR LIVES AND I... I OWE HER SO MUCH MORE. IT SEEMS BIZARRE THAT I COULD LOVE A CREATURE SO DIFFERENT FROM ME IN FORM, BUT I DO.

HER FORM MAY BE DIFFERENT BUT HER SOUL IS HUMAN.



KER-THUNK!



LET ME GO FIRST. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'LL FIND.

IDIOT! WE'RE WASTING TIME. SHE'LL DRY UP IF SHE'S AWAY FROM WATER FOR TOO LONG A TIME.



THE SUN IS SO BRIGHT-WHY IT MUST BE ALMOST NOON. WE'VE BEEN TALKING FOR A LONG TIME.

"FISH SHOULD BE FRIED. IF YOU WANT YOUR FISH, LOOK FOR IT IN THE OLD LIGHTHOUSE."



WHAT WE SAW AT THE TOP OF THE LIGHTHOUSE MADE THE INFAMOUS CRUELITIES OF THE MARQUIS DE SADE SEEM MILD.

OH, MY POOR CILIA.

RAYMOND, KILL ME PLEASE! I CAN'T STAND THIS.

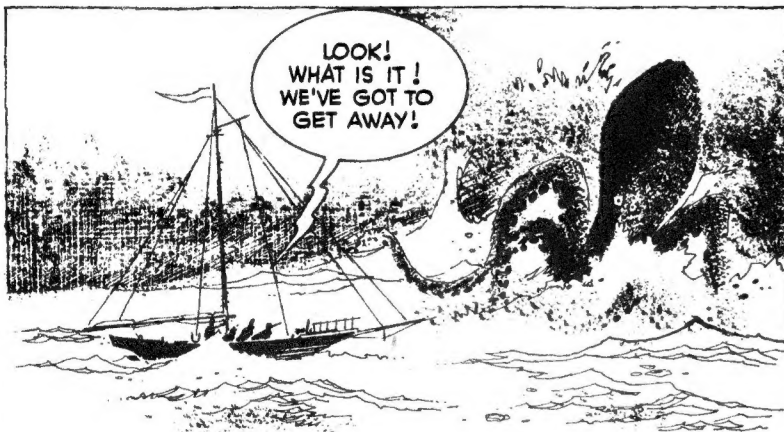


I WATCHED WITH MUTED HORROR AS CAPTAIN SPIKE PLUNGED THE HARPOON THROUGH HIS WIFE'S HEART. IT WAS OVER IN ONE AGONIZING SECOND.

AS TO THE FATE OF CILIA'S KILLERS, THERE IS NOTHING MORE THAN RUMORS. IF YOU CAN BELIEVE THEM, THE STORY IS THAT AFTER THEIR CRIME, THEY HELD A PARTY ABOARD ONE OF THE MEN'S FISHING BOAT.

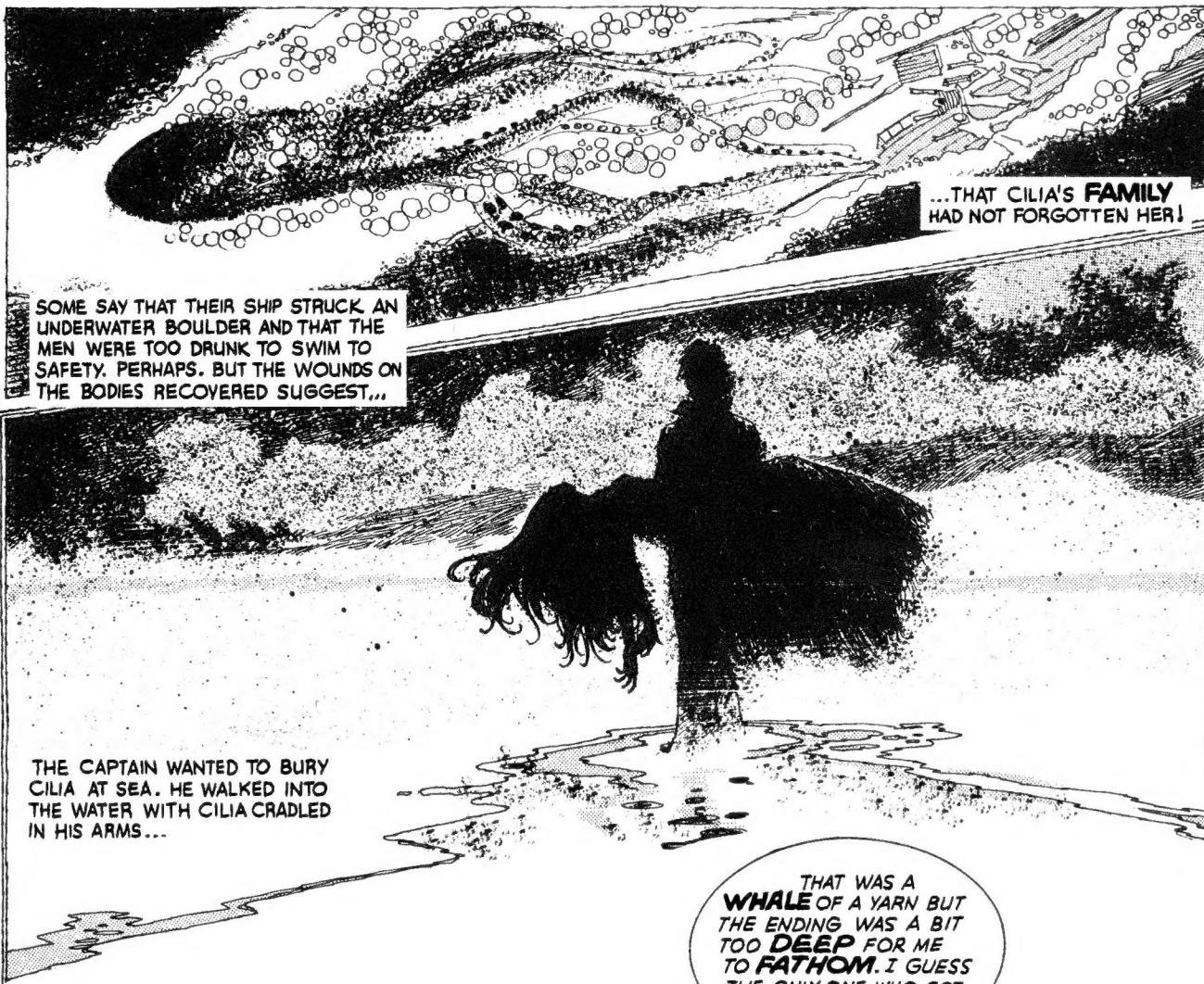


LOOK!
WHAT IS IT!
WE'VE GOT TO
GET AWAY!



...THAT CILIA'S FAMILY
HAD NOT FORGOTTEN HER!

SOME SAY THAT THEIR SHIP STRUCK AN UNDERWATER BOULDER AND THAT THE MEN WERE TOO DRUNK TO SWIM TO SAFETY. PERHAPS. BUT THE WOUNDS ON THE BODIES RECOVERED SUGGEST...



THE CAPTAIN WANTED TO BURY CILIA AT SEA. HE WALKED INTO THE WATER WITH CILIA CRADLED IN HIS ARMS...

THAT WAS A
WHALE OF A YARN BUT
THE ENDING WAS A BIT
TOO **DEEP** FOR ME
TO **FATHOM**. I GUESS
THE ONLY ONE WHO GOT
HOOKED WAS POOR
CILIA.

DON'T MISS
VAMPIRELLA#17
ON SALE ABOUT
APRIL 4TH AND
THAT'S NO FISH
STORY!



...AND NEVER RETURNED!





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE